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SOME TURNING-POINTS IN CHURCH HISTORY

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IN
CHURCH HISTORY

BEING
THE SOUTHWORTH LECTURES
IN ANDOVER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
FOR THE YEAR 1915

BY
AMBROSE WHITE VERNON
Minister of Harvard Church
Brookline, Mass.

THE PILGRIM PRESS
BOSTON CHICAGO

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BOSTON

TO MY TEACHER AND GUIDE

ARTHUR CUSHMAN McGIFFERT

PROFESSOR OF CHURCH HISTORY IN UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, NEW YORK CITY,

IN ABIDING ADMIRATION AND AFFECTION

NOTE

These lectures are an attempt to consider those particular crises in Church History which have been so far reaching as to determine the form of the organization of the Christian Churches. Their polity has been determined chiefly, I believe, by four outstanding historical events; the founding of the Church, the establishment of the Christian Ministry, the organization of delimited National Churches and the formation of free Churches, independent of both ecclesiastical and civil authority. One lecture is devoted to each of these pivotal events and to them a fifth is added which deals with the establishment of free churches on the shores of America.

The first of these lectures appeared in The Harvard Theological Review for January, 1917, and three of them have been delivered at Union Theological Seminary.

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LECTURE I

THE FOUNDING OF THE CHURCH

LECTURE I

THE FOUNDING OF THE CHURCH

The church has come to have an enduring place not only in history but in thought. At least since the writing of *The City of God* it has decided some of the most vital questions confronting us because of a peculiar sanctity attached to it. It is not therefore out of place to demand from time to time that it show us its credentials. The present lecture is an attempt to discover if there is anything peculiarly sacred about the manner of its founding that would justify us in ascribing unique spiritual authority to it.

And the surprising fact which we discover is, that we cannot discover any actual founding of the church whatever. We cannot be sure that the church was founded in any accurate sense of that term; it is probably more in accord with the facts to say that the movement which eventually became known as the church grew. Creation by fiat seems as mythical in this sphere as in more material realms. It seems as if there were a church almost before its members knew it.

In endeavoring to show that the founding of the church is obscure and to discover some rea-

sons for such obscurity, we shall be obliged to see if we can trace the rise of the idea of the church in the minds of the early friends and disciples of Jesus. Of course ideas and words are never quite conterminous. A word never covers an idea. If a word is laid on top of an idea, the idea peeps out all around it. Yet at the same time before an idea can clothe itself with a word it is in a pre-natal state and cannot be said to be properly born. And so, it seems to me, our first, but not our only, duty in attempting to come upon the birth-hour of the Christian church, is to discover, if we may, when the word "church" was first applied, either by its friends or its foes or its members, to the group of people who were held together by common devotion to Jesus of Nazareth, whom they recognized as the Christ.

Strictly speaking, there is only one thing to say: that we do not know when this word was first applied. But because we cannot know precisely, we are not excused from finding out all that we can know; because our sources are not all that we would wish them to be, there is no good reason for refusing to find out from them all that they have to tell us. We must therefore examine those early chapters of the Acts of the Apostles which contain virtually all that has even the faintest suggestion of being first-hand information about the earliest months and years in and about Jerusalem after the death of Jesus.

There are so few things that are certain about the authorship of the historical books of the New Testament that it is refreshing to come upon one of the few in connection with this book of the Acts. There can be no doubt that it was written by the same hand as that which wrote the Third Gospel. In the preface to that Gospel, the author virtually tells us that he has consulted various sources for information. The structure and language of the Acts lead us to the supposition that when he came to write the Acts he followed the practice he had used in writing the Gospel. Students of the book have fathered many theories concerning its structure, but they have had most to say about two sources which many of them have believed to underlie this work. One of these is the familiar "We" source, so called because of the sudden and unexplained appearance of the first personal pronoun in some of the later travels of Paul; the other has been even more vaguely denominated and it has been supposed to underlie the first, say, twelve chapters of the book, which are devoted to giving us a picture of the beginnings of the church in Jerusalem. Harnack, who has recently made a valiant attempt to identify the author of the "We" passages with the author of the entire work, still admits Luke's use of probably written sources for the first portion of the book.[1] The book itself cannot have been written of

[1] *Lukas der Arzt, pp. 84–5. Die Apostelgeschichte, Capitel 5.*

course before the last event therein narrated —the arrival of Paul in Rome. By that time, as the letters of Paul testify, the word "church" was applied as a matter of course to the local Christian communities. The author of the Acts, a Pauline admirer, would, therefore, be accustomed to use the word "church" for the various groups of Christian disciples of whom he was writing and in particular for the church at Jerusalem, which Paul so peculiarly revered. Under these circumstances, we must attribute either to a phenomenal intuition or to his sources the astonishing fact that until "the persecution against the church that was in Jerusalem" arose on the outburst and martyrdom of Stephen,[2] we have only one single instance of the use of the word "church" for the Christian circle.

We hear of the filling out of the apostolate, of the descent of the spirit in the upper room, of the large addition to the Christian company through the inspired speech of Peter, of the first startling miracle performed by him and John, of the imprisonment of the apostles and their courage and release, of the growth of the "multitude which believed" and of their brotherly life, and though it seems to us the most natural thing in the world to speak of these events as the beginnings of the church, that notable word is not once employed. We are further instructed concerning the deceit

[2] *Acts 8 : 1.*

and death of Ananias and Sapphira, of the renewed imprisonment and release of the apostles, of the strife between the Hellenists and the Hebrews, of the appointment of seven men to see that they were treated equally in the distribution of food, of the character and genius of Stephen, of his epoch-making speech in the temple, of the rage of his hearers and of his martyrdom; and though we should expect the word "church" in every paragraph, it occurs but once as a designation of the disciples. And its occurrence is neither in connection with any of the pivotal events of these stirring days, nor in the heart of any of the narratives, nor in those wonderful speeches of Peter and Stephen, so full of verisimilitude and breathing the spirit of the most primitive Christian theology; we find it in what I think may, under these circumstances, be confidently regarded as one of those seams with which an author is accustomed to join together independent narratives. Just at the close of the story of the death of Ananias and Sapphira, and before the transition to the healing ministry of Peter and the imprisonment of the apostles, we read these words: "And great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard these things."[3] This is the solitary use of that classic word in The Book of the Acts until the time of Stephen. Instead of this word "church," which we should have used con-

[3] *Acts 5 : 11.*

stantly and which all our teachers use constantly in the retelling of these brilliant narratives, we find other words, much less pretentious, to us much less characteristic—"believers," "brethren," "their own company," and "disciples." Of these the word "disciples" seems to be the technical word, or to be becoming the technical word, for this untechnical group of people who were expecting their Lord from heaven. It might have remained such, had not, as we read, "the disciples been called Christians first at Antioch."[4] Indeed until, in the last part of the eleventh chapter, after the conversion of both Paul and Cornelius has been recorded, we get to Antioch, whither certain men of Cyprus and Cyrene fled on the death of Stephen and where they preached the Lord Jesus to Greeks as well as Jews, the word "church" is used only in the seams of the narrative. Even in those seams, it occurs but four times and save for the obviously editorial sentence, "So the church had peace,"[5] it does not occur at all in that portion of the early chapters of Acts which on altogether other grounds Harnack assigns to the ancient Jerusalemic source.[6]

This peculiar state of affairs must not be dismissed from our minds until we have inquired whether it may have any historical sig-

[4] *Acts 11 : 36.*
[5] *Acts 9 : 31.*
[6] *Die Apostelgeschichte, pp. 148–152.*

nificance for our inquiry concerning the origin of the church.

I have said that the word "church" was never used in the heart of the early narratives or in the course of the early speeches to describe the disciples of Jesus. But once in the midst of Stephen's speech we find these words: "This is he [that Moses] . . . which was in the church in the wilderness with the angel that spake to him in the mount Sinai."[7] The word "church," though apparently not applied to the Christian groups in the earliest times, was applied by a prominent member of those groups to the Israelitish nation quite as a matter of course. That this is no mere accident is abundantly proved by reference to the Septuagint. Here we find the word "ecclesia," "church," used 71 times to translate "kahal" or its derivatives. It is also used 23 times in those parts of the Septuagint for which we have no Hebrew original. It is always employed as the equivalent of our word "assembly" or "company." It is the word usually employed to denote the assembly of Israel, in what we should call the ecclesiastical or exclusive sense. When, for example, we read that "an Ammonite and a Moabite shall not enter into the assembly of God forever," the word for "assembly" is the word "ecclesia." When it is said that "the transgressor shall be cut off from the assembly of my people," it is

[7] *Acts 7 : 38.*

again the word "ecclesia" that is used. Harnack calls attention to the fact that in the Septuagint "ecclesia" is usually the word used to translate "kahal," the most sacred word for the entire nation, whereas "synagogue" is used to translate "edhah," a more secular word.[8]

It therefore seems proper to suppose that the reason why the early Christians did not employ the word "church" to designate their own gatherings is because they used it to designate the assembly of the Jews to which they still regarded themselves as belonging. And that the author of the Acts preserved this interesting fact in his sources may be due to his knowledge of the Septuagint from which his Old Testament citations are taken.

While the fact that the early disciples of Jesus still regarded themselves as "Hebrews of the Hebrews" is well known of course to scholars, though not always duly appreciated even by them, it is widely ignored by most of us. This ignorance of ours makes it still difficult for us to do justice to the position and the emotions of that mother "church" in Jerusalem. It is, however, written clearly on the records that the early Christians "were continually in the temple blessing God,"[9] that the apostles "went up to the temple at the hour of prayer,"[10] after they had seen the risen Lord,

[8] *Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums, p. 292. Note 4.*
[9] *Luke 24 : 53.*
[10] *Acts 3 : 1.*

just as they had before, and that they preached in one of the porches of the temple [11]—and probably in the synagogues—as those who felt themselves there at home.

The old Latin prologue to Mark's Gospel asserts that Mark, after having become a Christian, cut off his thumb so that he should not be eligible for the priesthood.[12] This tradition confirms the letter and the spirit of the early chapters of Acts, and indicates that to the Jews faith in Jesus as Christ did not disqualify a man for ritual service in the holy place so surely as the lack of a thumb. Nothing was further from the minds of the disciples than to cut themselves off from the church or assembly of the Jews. Why should they take such a step? They alone among their people had been permitted to recognize the Messiah. Soon their leader was to descend from heaven to restore the kingdom to Israel and to choose from their group those who were to reign over the tribes of the nation. Would such a confident hope lead them to make less or more of those laws which had been given to prepare the way of the Lord and which they had kept in company with him? He was crucified not for denouncing the Jews, but for claiming to be the Jews' prince. They had not separated from their church when they were baptized by John; thereby they had been only more surely ad-

[11] *Acts 3 : 11, 12.*
[12] *Cf. Weiss: Das älteste Evangelium, p. 400.*

mitted into membership of the coming kingdom of the Messiah. And when either at Pentecost or at the time of the earthquake they had been baptized with the Holy Ghost, they were not thereby separated from their people; they were merely given the power to bring that kingdom in. More than ever they recognized themselves as necessary to the redemption and to the exaltation of the Jewish nation. It was they who were to enable their countrymen to repent so that their sins might be blotted out, and in consequence the Lord might be sent from heaven. Hence they called themselves "believers" as distinguished from their unbelieving countrymen, "disciples" as distinguished from crucifiers and mockers of their Messiah, and "brethren" as their Lord had indeed already called them; but the thought of cutting themselves off from the church of the Jews, the assembly of the people of God, did not occur to them for a long time. And until it so occurred to them, the church of Jesus Christ, in any accurate sense of the words, as distinguished from the church of the Jewish people, could not have been founded.

When we ask ourselves, therefore, regarding the founding of the Christian church, we ask ourselves to discover the point of time or the point of consciousness when the Christian disciples regarded themselves not as a part of the Jewish nation but as a substitute for the

Jewish nation, not as belonging to the people of God but as constituting the people of God.

And here it may be well to repeat the statement which was made at the outset and which I hope has become already better established. We cannot come upon any one moment of history when the church was founded; we cannot tell whether the church was founded; it is probably more in accord with the facts to say that it grew. Our sources do not record any final and explicit break of the disciples with the Jewish nation. They do, however, record such a change of the relations of the disciples with the Jewish church at one particular point and perhaps also at one particular place that we may say that then the church consciousness, absent before, had arisen.

In our search for that moment when the early disciples regarded themselves as the holy group which had been substituted in the favor of God for the ancient people of Israel, we find five events which chiefly call for our scrutiny. It may also be said that these five events seem to church historians somehow or other to mark the beginning of the church.

The first of these events occurred while our Lord was yet upon the earth, going himself habitually into the synagogue on the Sabbath and regarding the temple as his Father's house. It is that solemn moment that is set aside for us all from other moments of time, when at Cæsarea Philippi, on a brief retirement from

the confines of Palestine, Simon Peter recognized Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah. Now there can be no question that that moment marked the definite recognition of the supreme authority of Jesus Christ, and that it helped to give to the words spoken on the mount and by the sea, to the parables of the publican and the prodigal and the ministering Samaritan, the carrying power through which they swept through—and swept out—the world. But does that recognition of Jesus as the Messiah amount to the laying of the corner stone of the Christian Church? There is no such thought in the earliest of the Gospels which report the event.[13] Only in the Gospel of Matthew do we find an interpolation in the older account which might be construed in that sense. There we read that Jesus blessed Peter for recognizing him as the Messiah, and added, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."[14]

It is to this passage that those resort who like to call Jesus "the Founder of the Church." But there are three reasons which render it impossible to believe that we have here to do with such an event. In the first place, the verb is in the future rather than in the present tense. If Jesus is to be regarded as the personal founder of the church, it must be at some future and un-

[13] *Mark 8 : 29.*
[14] *Matt. 16 : 18.*

discoverable moment. In the second place, the words, if spoken by Jesus, would almost inevitably have been treasured with his most sacred utterances. It is well-nigh inconceivable that Mark would have omitted them as too unimportant to mention, or that they would have found—as seems the case—no place in the Logia, the earliest collection of Jesus' sayings. The fact that the word "church" is never put into Jesus' mouth in the New Testament except here and in another passage in this same Gospel of Matthew is very significant. And the second passage bears even more unmistakable marks of a late origin. There Jesus is represented as saying, "If a brother sin against thee and thou tell it to the church, and he refuse to hear the church, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican."[15] Not only the word "church" but the words "Gentile" and "publican" seem utterly out of place on Jesus' lips, in the significance in which they are used. Moreover the conception of Jesus' band of disciples as a disciplinary organization seems quite unhistorical. If Jesus used the words at all, the church to which he alluded was the Jewish Church and not the Christian one. And in the third place, we are confident that the recognition of Jesus as the Messiah does not mark the founding of the Christian Church, because after that recognition Jesus went with his disciples into the temple and purified its

[15] *Matt. 18 : 17.*

courts, and partook of the feast of the Passover with his disciples, as though they were all still members of the Jewish Church. In it, indeed, he had peculiar power, but to it he and they alike belonged. The break with the Jews had not yet come.

Weizsäcker and Bacon are at one in regarding Peter rather than Jesus as the Founder of the church. They regard him as such, however, not because of his recognition of Jesus at Cæsarea Philippi as the Messiah, but because he was the first to whom Christ was revealed in resurrection glory.[16] "He appeared to Peter"—this phrase out of the 15th of 1st Corinthians seems to them to point to a greater vision of Peter than any he had while Jesus walked by his side, and in virtue of which he became the founder of the Christian Church. Yet they hesitate to say definitely that the appearance of Jesus to Peter marked the founding of the church; the event was too personal for that, and, as personal, it has quite disappeared from the narrative of the Acts. McGiffert, who inclines to the belief that Peter was the "second founder of the church"[17] does, however, single out another definite moment—of great importance in Christian history—for our attention in seeking for the origin of the church. "That Christianity has had a his-

[16] *Weizsäcker: Das apostolische Zeitalter, pp. 5, 13, 15. Bacon: Founding of the Church. Chapter 2.*
[17] *Apostolic Age, p. 48.*

tory," he writes,[18] "is due to the fact that these disciples did not go back disheartened to their old pursuits and live on as if they had never known Jesus, but that on the contrary, filled with the belief that their Master still lived and conscious of holding a commission from him, they banded themselves together with the resolve of completing his work and preparing their countrymen for his return. Their resolve, put into execution when they left Galilee and returned to Jerusalem, marks the real starting-point in the history of the church." If indeed they came to any such clear-cut resolve, the moment of that resolve plays an important part in the gathering together of Christian believers, but that gathering would have regarded itself not as a church but as a favored group within the Jewish Church. Preuschen, who also emphasizes the place of Peter among the Christian disciples, seems better to express the facts when he says, "Peter gathered a company of like-minded people, but without giving up communion with the Jewish people and the Jewish faith." [19]

The Day of Pentecost is the third great moment in the history of Christianity which has been hit upon for the founding of the Christian Church, which seems so curiously to baffle our search. Of all these moments it seems most widely chosen for this great honor. "While

[18] *Apostolic Age, p. 42.*
[19] *Handbuch der Kirchengeschichte: Das Altertum, bearbeitet von Erwin Preuschen, p. 37.*

the apostles and disciples," writes Philip Schaff, "about one hundred and twenty in number, no doubt mostly Galileans, were assembled before the morning devotions of the festal day and were waiting in prayer for the fulfilment of the promise, the exalted Saviour sent from his heavenly throne the Holy Spirit upon them and founded his church upon earth. The church of the new covenant was ushered into existence with startling signs which filled the spectators with wonder and fear."[20] And George P. Fisher, not quite so certainly, writes, "With the day of Pentecost the career of the 'Church Militant' fairly begins."[21] And Wilhelm Möller, still more cautiously, says, "The Spirit, proceeding from the Ascended One, not the earthly manifestation of Jesus nor his teaching in itself, is the really church-founding [element], yet even this [is to be taken] in the sense that the separation of this particular fellowship from the general religious-national fellowship of the Jewish people was first the result of a gradual process."[22]

But the result of that outpouring of the spirit was not the founding of a church but the preaching to brethren of an already established church by those who were thus spiritually endowed from on high. So far was Peter, who was the spokesman of those thus filled with the spirit, from thinking that a new church had

[20] *History of the Christian Church, Vol. I, p. 228.*
[21] *Ibid., Vol. I, p. 19.*
[22] *Lehrbuch der Kirchengeschichte, Vol. I, p. 50.*

been founded and that he had been cut off from his people, that he appealed to his fellow Jewish Church members to hear the prophet of whom Moses had testified, saying, "Every soul that heareth not that prophet shall be cut off from among the people."[23] Peter evidently expected that the Lord was about to purify that ancient church, which had been almost "since the world began." It is impossible therefore to think that the Day of Pentecost marks the moment when the disciples believed themselves to supplant the children of Israel as the chosen people of God. They were reformers, not revolutionists.

The fourth event, of sufficient importance to call for a brief mention, is the choice of seven men by the early believers to see to it that equitable division of food and necessaries of life was made between the Jewish and Hellenistic widows among the disciples in Jerusalem. It is hard for us not to use the word "church" in this connection, but it does not appear to have entered into the mind of the author of the Acts; "When the number of the disciples was multiplying," is the sentence with which he introduces the narrative.[24] This incident was enhanced in its importance for a long time by the almost universal belief among church historians that it marked the institution of the diaconate, thereby regarded as the earliest

[23] *Acts 3 : 23.*
[24] *Acts 6 : 1.*

body of which they had positive information in the early church. A more careful reading of the account, however, has brought to light that these seven men were chosen for a temporary and definite task, and that they are never once named deacons in the book which narrates their selection by the disciples. Their selection, therefore, does not betray any church-consciousness.

There is left for our final scrutiny an event that is connected with one of these seven men who were chosen to oversee the distribution of food among the widows of the disciples in Jerusalem. Stephen had engaged in serious and keen dispute with the members of one of the synagogues in Jerusalem. It is not altogether clear what that dispute was about. But so fundamental was it in character that his opponents summoned him before the council and the high priest called upon him for his defence. Nothing can be clearer than that Stephen was recognized as a Jew in regular standing, and that he recognized the high priest as the chief power in the church to which he felt that he belonged and concerning which, indeed, by that very title he spoke in the defence that he made before the council. To him the church was still the Jewish church, the people of God. In his defence, he seems to have laid emphasis on two quite diverse points —the blindness of heart that had always characterized Israel, and the temporary character of

all buildings made with hands, whether synagogue, tabernacle, or even temple. The report of his speech is too fragmentary for us to be certain concerning his thought. That he mentioned Jesus is clear, but precisely what he said about him we cannot tell. It seems, however, overwhelmingly probable that he set him higher than Moses both before God and in the church of the Jewish people. At the close of his defence the council and the witnesses stoned him to death. Thus they separated him from the people of God, from the church, in the manner prescribed in the law. The disciples were aware that he had been stoned for the convictions which many of them shared. It may be that the closest friends of Jesus did not agree with Stephen in what he may have said about the temporary character of Jewish institutions, for we read that the apostles remained at Jerusalem during the persecution which now broke out there upon the disciples. But a great number of the most loyal Christians were compelled to flee from the sacred city, under a virtual sentence of excommunication from the church to which they had up to that time given most devoted adhesion. The authorities of the church of God had denied their right to partake of the worship of the temple and of the privileges and promises of the fathers. What was to be done? In the Book of Acts we read: "They therefore that were scattered abroad upon the tribulation that arose about Stephen

travelled as far as Phœnicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to none save only to the Jews. But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene''—of the very synagogue to which Stephen seems to have been attached—''who, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass that even for a whole year they were gathered together in the church, and that the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.'' [25]

The fact that in this short passage, which I have curtailed in citing, the infrequent word ''church'' occurs twice, has some significance, particularly as it occurs in the heart of the narrative; but the striking thing is that the disciples were no longer Jews either in their own eyes or in the eyes of outsiders. They were a new company, made up of Jews and Greeks, a new religious group, whose main characteristics were developed from their allegiance to a Christ, whatever that term may have meant to those who first dubbed them by the immortal nickname ''Christian.'' But we can tell what it meant to the disciples. To all of them, whether Greeks or Jews, Jesus was the Christ. Certainly here has arisen the consciousness of being a peculiar people of God, of having a standing with the Messiah, which the Jews as such no longer shared with them. Throughout the book of the Acts we find a continual sense

[25] *Acts 11 : 19, 20, 26.*

of the turning from the Jews, who rejected their own Christ, to the Gentiles, who accepted the Jewish Christ and yet no longer the Jewish Christ. For, as the Fourth Gospel has it, he had come "unto his own and his own had received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, who were born not of blood but of God."[26] Jesus soon ceased to be the prince of the Jewish nation and became "the Head over all things to the church, which is . . . the fulness of Him that filleth all in all."[27] The church was the kingdom of God; in it Jesus reigned; to it he brought his gifts. It was the saints in Corinth and Rome and Ephesus that were to judge the angels.[28] They were in time past no people, but they had become the people of God.[29] When this feeling arose, the word "church," heretofore used to denote assemblies which considered themselves sacred, whether of Diana in Ephesus or of the people of Jehovah, was naturally applied to the Christian disciples. It was applied at first perhaps to all Christian disciples in their capacity of people of God, but it soon became common to call each local Christian assembly by that name.

I do not wish to be understood as locating the origin of the church by detecting the pres-

[26] *John 1 : 12, 13.*
[27] *Ephesians 1 : 22, 23.*
[28] *1 Corinthians 6 : 3.*
[29] *1 Peter 2 : 10.*

ence or absence of any single word. The word "church" had never come in the Septuagint to have a strictly sacred meaning. For example, there occurs in the Psalms the phrase, "the assembly of evil doers,"[30] where the word which is translated by "assembly" in English is translated by "ecclesia" in Greek. We must by no means decide the origin of the church by the mere use of the Greek word for it. And yet I feel that, roughly speaking, the growth of the idea "church" among the disciples may be said to coincide with the use of the word "ecclesia" to designate their gatherings. And I find very great significance in Epiphanius' declaration—which seems to bewilder some of the historians—that the Jewish Christians rejected the word "church" as a designation for their gatherings in favor of the word "synagogue."[31] They could not bring themselves to give their enduring allegiance to anything but the Jewish Church nor to find in Jesus anything but the Jewish Messiah, whom they were fortunate enough to recognize. I feel that Weizsäcker is right in affirming that the Christians in general would not call themselves a synagogue, because they believed themselves to be in possession of the kingdom of God and to constitute the church of God.[32] "The church of God" was perhaps the first name rather than "the church of Christ," because it was "the people of God"

[30] *Psalms 26 : 5.*
[31] *Epiphanii Opera: ed. Dindorfius, Vol. II. p. 110.*
[32] *Weizsäcker: Das apostolische Zeitalter, pp. 39–40.*

and not "the people of Christ" for which it was substituted.[33]

But it is not the use of the word "church" upon which I would place the chief emphasis. It is used but 23 times in the entire book of the Acts,[34] that is to say, infrequently even after the founding of the church in Antioch. It is true that while it is little used, and not used at all in most of the early chapters of the Acts where we should have constantly expected it, it is used constantly in the letters of Paul. But as I have said, we must not depend upon the use of a word to point us to the moment when the thing the word denotes arose. Our idea of the founding of the church depends in large degree upon the connotation of the word "church" for us. It seems to me that by the word "church" the early Christians meant the peculiar people of God. In Sohm's masterly *Kirchenrecht* the church is said to signify "a gathering of the New Testament Covenant people before and with God."[35] That they were His peculiar covenant people seems to have dawned upon them in Antioch, or going to Antioch, where they were first set off from the rest of the world as Christians at about the time when that nickname was first fastened upon them. Therefore it seems to me correct to say that the church—in the sense in which its first members understood it—was founded neither by the

[33] *Cf. Acts 20 : 28; Gal. 1 : 22; 1 Thess. 1 : 1.*
[34] *Cf. Harnack: Lukas der Arzt, p. 25, n. 3.*
[35] *Kirchenrecht, Vol. I, p. 18.*

Lord (save as all things were believed to be under His control) nor by Peter, neither at Cæsarea Philippi nor on the Day of Pentecost, but when, after the excommunication of Stephen, the disciples found themselves banished from the church of the Jews and yet not without God or hope in the world. It was founded in part by those who upon that persecution went everywhere preaching the word—and making a people out of those who had never been a people—and partly also by the council of the Jews who stoned Stephen as he was calling upon God and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!"

If this be true, or in the direction of the truth, the exact moment of the founding of the church cannot be marked off accurately, nor is it important so to mark it off. The church was an outgrowth of historical development and came into being through the opposition of the foes of Jesus to the claim of his friends to a place in the church of the Jews to which he and they had alike belonged and which was unspeakably precious to them all. *Stephen and those who stoned him* must be regarded as the most likely founders of the Christian Church.

These beginnings of the Christian Church justify two considerations. In the first place, neither Jesus nor his earliest disciples were separatists. They did not separate. They were separated by the authorities from the church to which they belonged. The love of

Jesus for the Jewish Church, for its temple and its synagogues, is apt in our time to be obscured. He began his public career at Nazareth by employing the opportunity open to Jewish teachers in the synagogue. Among the events which brought about his death, his startling cleansing of the temple occupies a prominent place. To him the Jewish temple was a house of prayer for all nations, a place where all men were to find access to their God, as children in a Father's house, a place wide enough for him and inexpressibly sacred to him. He realized that the Jewish people needed a new conception of the mercy and loving-kindness of their God. But there was nothing further from his mind than the proclamation of a new God or the establishment of a new family. He appealed constantly to the Scriptures as an authority against the newer traditions of his time. He had no wish to separate from the Ten Commandments and from the twenty-third Psalm. He had only come to fulfil the expectations of men whom he regarded as the very spokesmen of God. One of the great problems of New Testament study is the degree to which he opened the Kingdom of Heaven to any save Jewish believers. The God he revered was the God of his fathers; it was of that God that he believed himself the Son. We cannot of course conceive that he believed Jews only to have a duty toward God, but, unless our sources utterly deceive us, he believed

that the highest duty men could have was toward the God of the Jews. A Bible without the New Testament is to us an absurdity; a Bible without the Old Testament would have been to him a blasphemy; perhaps we ought to say that any other Bible than the Old Testament was for him unthinkable. Be that as it may, Jesus was anything but a dogmatist; he was not beginning religious history *de novo;* the majestic utterances of the Jewish prophets were to him a revelation of the eternal God. Inclusion and reverence were the marks of his religious temper; the fanaticism and narrowness of come-outers seem completely foreign to his spirit; he came to expand and not to contract the boundaries of the family of God. I am sure that he would regard any holy fellowship as incomplete which did not include the sublime ethical monotheists from whom he sprang. What he would have us remember is that he died not by the Jews but for them.

And the second consideration is thus: the spirit of Jesus was much more important to our Lord than the church of Jesus. With the one he would have identified himself; of the other he knew nothing. If we must choose between the spirit of Jesus without a church and the church of Jesus without his spirit, we will choose the former. Undue attention to the organization of the church and to its useful ceremonies has blurred, distorted, almost erased, the spirit of Jesus, which

was before the church and is independent of it. There can be no doubt that history has justified by the stern law of necessity the gathering and the maintenance of the Christian Church. It embraces for us, as for the fellow-believers of Stephen and of Paul, all people who believe on God through Jesus, His well-beloved Son, and who through that belief stand in a peculiar relation of intimacy with Him. But no more with us than with Jesus is the church the object of our spiritual allegiance; our supreme devotion must, like his, be reserved for God and men. And the ultimate purpose of our lives must be not to build up a strong church but to open the human heart through all possible means to the divine spirit of Jesus.

LECTURE II

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

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The first great moment in ecclesiastical history, as we have seen, was the establishment of the church. The precise moment of its establishment eluded us, but we felt that we could come within a few years of it. And although the cause of its establishment was not exactly stated in the early records, it seemed comparatively clear that it was brought about by the decision of the leaders of the Jews not to allow the followers of Jesus to worship with them. It was through their expulsion from the Jewish Church that the early disciples were forced to believe that God had gathered a new church for Himself out of those who recognized the Messiahship of Jesus. And when the Gentiles also accepted him they realized that those who were his people were called to be the people of God and so to separate themselves from all other people of the world.

The second great moment in ecclesiastical history was another moment of separation, the separation of the Christian clergy from the laity of the church, the origin of the Christian ministry as a distinct class among Christian

believers, the fixing of a deep gulf between ordinary and extraordinary Christian disciples. We must now try to discover the origin of this fateful distinction in the Christian church and the causes which produced it.

Among Protestant scholars, there seems to be little difference of opinion either about the beginning or the end of this inquiry of ours. We seem to know both the starting-point and the goal of that movement in the Christian church which produced a Christian hierarchy, culminating in the power and authority of the pontifex maximus, the Bishop of Rome. It is about the impulses and the stages of the movement that sharp diversity of opinion exists. With the meager time and limited scholarship at my disposal, it would be futile for me to attempt to trace the exact evolution of the Christian bishop, the Christian pastor with a suggestion of priest, the figure which dominates the development with which we are to-day concerned. It does not seem to me that the sources which are open to us allow us to be dogmatic concerning it. I am anxious, simply, to discover sufficient grounds for the institution of the distinction between clergymen and laymen in the church, to estimate their moral worth, and to aid in deciding whether the distinction is of Christ or of Anti-Christ.

The starting-point of this movement toward the bishopric is made thoroughly clear to us in Paul's earlier letters, and particularly in his

letters to the Corinthians. In these letters we find the people of Christ governed by the Holy Ghost. The important question whether that Holy Ghost proceeded from God or from Christ need not here detain us. In any case, it descended from above upon the disciples of Christ and upon them alone. It imparted power to each but the power was diverse. It was given only in part for the individual who received it, chiefly for the community of which each was a citizen. *Every Christian* was an ordained man —ordained by divine power for a divinely ordered function of a divine people. There was no male or female, no Greek or Jew, no bond or free. The Spirit gave to each not as each would but as He would. There were no orders and there was not much order. It cannot be said that the first beatitude was much in vogue in the first century. To be poor in spirit was not as common in the Christian churches as to be poor in this world's goods. And I imagine that we could find no surer way to understand why this beatitude stands at the top of the list than to be ushered into a gathering of the primitive church. It was not a self-governed body; it was not an ecclesiastically-governed body; it was a spirit-governed body. And it would appear that the gifts of the spirit ignored each other. One would spring to his feet in ecstasy in one corner and another in another; others would feel suddenly called upon to interpret these mysterious shoutings and babblings and

contortions to their fellows; two or three would feel called upon at once by the Spirit to proclaim a message from God to men. In spite of the sincerity and joy all about them modern men present at such a gathering would find themselves longing for a poverty of the Spirit.

But there were, after all, definite marks of order in these gatherings from the first. To begin with, each man who became a Christian was *baptized.* Baptism and the Spirit could not long be separated. Which usually preceded the other is not so clear as that either one led to the other or that they were coincident. There may have been unbaptized Christians, but we do not hear of any. There is no doubt that we should have regarded those who desired baptism after hearing the preaching of the gospel by Paul as Christians before they received it, but there is more doubt as to their own feelings on the matter. Then there was also a *meal* together; at first this meal may have been eaten to appease hunger, but by the time of Paul such a motive was regarded as blasphemous. In Corinth from the very beginning—and Corinth is a fairly early church—the meal was regarded not as a supper but as a rite. Very soon, moreover, we hear of *almsgiving* in the churches. This may have been exclusively a matter between individuals at the first; we can only say that our earliest sources indicate that it soon came to be a church matter. Christian communities were asked for gifts as com-

munities and managed their gifts as communities. Now I suppose that if we had *asked* the early Christians why they baptized and celebrated the supper of the Lord and managed their finances carefully, they would have attributed these marks of order to the Spirit, but whether they *were* asked that question—by others or themselves—is not quite clear. Sohm, who seems sure that they were, draws a picture of the early church which is not impressionistic enough to be accurate, I think; the lines are all filled in, as though the early Christians were alive to the logical inferences that a modern German might draw from their fundamental premises. It is certain that Paul believed that the quiet ministries of Christians were gifts of the spirit,[1] but we cannot be sure that he was not consciously endeavoring to persuade the Corinthians of that fact. At Corinth certainly "spiritual" and "ecstatic" had pretty much the same connotation; yet even in impetuous and enthusiastic Corinth, there were church poor and therefore church finances, there was crying need for orderly procedure in the Christian gatherings and there were set Christian rites. Even in Corinth, therefore, avenues of development toward the bishopric were open.

But if there were bishops in Corinth, they played so small a part that Paul does not even mention them or appeal to them in a case of flagrant immorality for which he demanded

[1] *1 Cor. 12 : 8, 28.*

church discipline, about 25 years after Christ's death. We do well to think of the early church there as a democracy with the Spirit as an extra-constitutional monarch. But only six or seven years later, we find Paul addressing a letter to "the church at Philippi with its bishops and deacons."[2] Whether or not the church at Philippi was lacking in prophets and speakers with tongues, we cannot say; it would seem strange for a church of that time and place in the first years of discipleship to be altogether without them; but at Philippi, at any rate, in the year 56 A.D. it was the prophets and not the bishops that were found unnecessary to mention, while the bishops were singled out with the deacons as the proper persons to whom Paul should direct his letter. Thus early do we find in prominent place the bishops of a Christian church. It is our task to find why they rose to prominence and what turned prominence into authoritative control.

After many years of research, the leading scholars have settled upon the three more ordered features of early church life, to which I have already alluded, as marking out the main avenues of development from the primitive Christian democracy to the authoritative bishop of the middle of the third century. They usually emphasize one of the three at the expense of the others, but the three leading avenues from democracy under the Spirit to episcopacy

[2] *Phil. 1 : 1.*

under Rome are, first, the care of the church finances, second, the moderatorship of the church meetings, and third, exclusive rights in the Eucharist. Among our modern scholars Hatch is the name we associate with the first avenue, Lütgert with the second and Sohm with the third.

That the unexciting matter of church finances played an important part in the early Christian communities can scarcely be doubted. The first real crime recorded in the Acts of the Apostles as committed in church circles is the financial deceit of Ananias and Sapphira, and the love of money it seems was the root not only of the first sin but also of the first election in the church at Jerusalem. Seven men had to be chosen to see that Greeks and Hebrews obtained their proper shares of the daily ministration. The epochal conference in Jerusalem concerning Gentile Christianity seems to have insisted that whereas the Jews had imparted spiritual goods to the Gentiles, the Gentiles should impart material goods to the Jews. In the midst of crucial matters, personal and moral, Paul urged the duty of this financial contribution upon his Gentile churches and was writing friendly letters about the messengers who had been chosen to collect it.[3] Almsgiving was one of the leading Christian virtues as it had been one of the leading Jewish ones. "The Teaching of the Apostles," written at about

[3] *Cf. 2 Cor. 8 : 18–24; 9 : 1–15; Gal. 2 : 10; Rom. 15 : 25–29.*

the turn of the first century, devotes its initial chapter to this matter. And so when Paul addresses his letter to the Philippians to the bishops and deacons of the church to express his thanks for the church's generous contribution to his material needs in prison, some say that it was because those officers had gathered it. Furthermore, Hatch presents evidence—perhaps somewhat meager for quite so sweeping an assertion—to prove "that the officers of administration and finance of non-Christian organizations of Asia Minor and Syria were chiefly known" either by the title of "epimeletes" (caretaker) or of "episcopos" (overseer).[4] It is clear that administrative officers of municipalities and standing committees and permanent commissioners of government were known as episcopoi "bishops." And it may well be—though we can say no more than that—that the title "bishop" was introduced into the early church because the function of its bearer was administrative and financial, as it was in Greek communities and in the Septuagint usage. The financial status of the early Christians and the growing necessity for Christian workers soon made the offering for the poor one of the chief functions of Christian worship. In a famous passage of his Apology, Justin Martyr describes in detail the collection of the offerings of the people at the Eucharist and

[4] *Edwin Hatch: The Organization of the Early Christian Churches, pp. 36–37.*

their presentation to the Christian who presided at this feast.[5] "The Teaching of the Apostles" advises the appointment of bishops and deacons to perform the service of lacking prophets and teachers, and as this advice is given just after directions regarding the eucharistic meal, it is fair to suppose that "The Teaching" means these bishops and deacons to preside over that rite and to collect the customary offerings there made.[6] And there can be no doubt that as a matter of fact the bishop had control of these offerings at the beginning of the third century.[7]

All this makes it very probable that we are following no blind alley when we regard a bishop as a financial and administrative "officer" of the early Christians. Finance is certainly one of the avenues which led from democracy to episcopacy. But important as finance is, is there anything in finance to create a sacred order of clergy, from which the entire laity is excluded? Church Treasurers are important now and they were more important in the early days, but when we think of the prophets and the teachers, of the apostles and martyrs, of the body of elders from which the bishops were chosen, and of the administration of the sacred rites of baptism and the Eucharist, it seems scarcely possible that church treasurers should have obtained an exclusive right

[5] *Apology. Chapter 67.*
[6] *Teaching of the Apostles. Sec. 15.*
[7] *Cf. Sohm: Kirchenrecht, pp. 70, 75 and notes.*

to appoint their own successors and to dominate the life of the churches. It is indeed true—and I marvel that New Testament scholars have not impressed us more with its significance—that even in Paul's time, the gifts of the spirit seem to have been regarded as given to individual Christians for their life-time or at least during their good behavior. The gift of prophecy made the man who received it not a mere recipient of the gift of prophecy, but a prophet; the gift of teaching made a man a teacher and so on. It is, I suppose, possible that the gift of managing finances made a man a treasurer—a "bishop," if you please—for life, and a bishop by divine appointment. But others would have had divine appointment for more weighty and spiritual duties, and the assent of the whole church would probably have been necessary for the employment and demonstration of the gift of caring for the church moneys. It seems, to say the least, improbable that the oversight of church moneys should have been the only cause or even the *main* cause for the creation of the Christian hierarchy.

The second avenue from spiritual democracy or theocratic democracy to episcopacy lies in the domain of public order. It is perhaps well staked out for us by the title of one of Professor Lütgert's interesting monographs: "The Conflict of Office and Spirit." In a series of most

suggestive monographs,[8] this Halle Professor has sought to make clear that the chief conflict in the early church was not between Christianity and Judaism, as we would suppose, but between Christianity and a kind of docetic enthusiasm, which later became known under the name of Gnosticism. It appears to me that in the light of what Reitzenstein[9] and others have uncovered to us concerning the milieu of the early church, the position of Professor Lütgert is essentially correct. When the early Jewish Christians, after the death of Stephen, took Christianity into Asia Minor, they took it into a region where men were seeking to escape from the ills of human flesh by escaping from human flesh itself. This escape they made not by the avenue of death but by the avenue of religious rites. Through these mysteries they passed, as they supposed, from human into divine life and received here on earth the divine, deathless, invisible, untrammeled spirit. They treated the body with the same contempt which is meted out to it by the Christian Scientists of to-day. Indeed I think we shall do more justice both to Christian Science and to Gnosticism if we remember that they belong to the same genus. But there was this great difference between our case and theirs. The church has formed the atmosphere into which Chris-

[8] *Freiheitspredigt u. Schwarmgeister in Korinth 1908. Die Vollkommenen in Philipperbrief und die Enthusiasten in Thessalonich 1909. Die Irrlehrer der Pastoralbriefe 1909.*

[9] *Die hellenistischen Mysterien-Religionen.*

tian Science has intruded; the mystery religions formed the atmosphere into which Christianity intruded. What wonder if a great body of early Gentile disciples, hearing Paul's earnest proclamation of freedom from the Jewish law and freedom in the Spirit of God, should have regarded Christianity as a means of bringing them into that blessed realm of the spirit where sin had no entrance and where "the resurrection was past already,"[10] by new mysterious rites and by a more miracle-working spirit than any which Egypt or Persia could produce. It is because we no longer ignore the world of the first century in our reading of the New Testament and the Apostolic Fathers that we see in the condition of the Corinthian church, at the time Paul wrote his letters to it, a sort of cross-section of early Christianity as a whole. This much at least may *certainly* be said. In Corinth, at about the year 50 A.D., disorder, due to ecstasies of the Spirit, prevailed at the gatherings of Christians.[11] The infallible sign of Christ's presence was the gift of tongues, as the event narrated in the second chapter of Acts bears witness. At Philippi, about the year 58, there were those who regarded themselves as "perfect."[12] Not so much later, perhaps, as we have been led to believe, we hear in the Pastoral Letters of the presence of those who proclaim that "the resur-

[10] *2 Tim. 2 : 18.*
[11] *See particularly 1 Cor. 14.*
[12] *Phil. 3 : 15.*

rection is past already."[13] At the turn of the Century a long section of the Epistle of Clement might be considered irrelevant, unless the writer were tactfully appealing to those in Corinth who disbelieved the resurrection, as they had disbelieved it at an earlier time.[14] Early in the second century we hear from the "Teaching of the Apostles" that prophets were given to having visions which accrued to their own material comfort, and from the Second Letter of Peter that new-made converts were seduced by those who promised them liberty while they themselves were slaves of corruption.[15] Ignatius, at about the same time, in the letter to the Trallians, avers distinctly that there are those who affirm both that they themselves are mere semblance and that Christ suffered in semblance only.[16] We have only to mention the words, Gnosticism, Montanism, Marcionism, to call before us the extent and the longevity of enthusiastic and extravagant movements in the Christian church. Now there can be no doubt that the staid and sober sort of people in the Christian church who from the beginning had "despised prophecy"[17] would increase in the face of the extravagances of those who as late as the "Teaching of the Apostles" had to be

[13] *2 Tim. 2 : 18.*
[14] *Clement to the Corinthians. Sec. 24–26.*
[15] *2 Pet. 2 : 19.*
[16] *Ignatius: Epistle to the Trallians. Sec. 10.*
[17] *1 Thess. 5 : 20.*

cautioned not to despise bishops.[18] The character of the time allows us to have great sympathy with those who opposed the Christian liberty which Paul proclaimed—and to revere even more deeply that great apostle, who insisted that that liberty was not a liberty unto the flesh but the liberty of the humble, ministering, childlike, loving spirit of Christ. As time went on the elders of the community would more and more vigorously assert themselves against the youthful or newly converted enthusiasts. The connotation of this word "elder" is not as clear as we would wish, but whether it signifies long years of life or long years of church membership, in either case the influence of the elders would probably be cast on the side of order. If old in years, they would have grown weary even of spiritual orgies, if proud of their conversion by the apostles or of their acquaintance with traditions of the church, they would realize in the esoteric and exotic mystery-teachings a departure from the highest motives of the best and most substantial Christians. From this group of elders, the bishops were always taken. In Philippi, at any rate, and probably in a very wide area there were several bishops in a church. Perhaps it was simply another name for elder at first; it came gradually however to be applied to that elder who presided at the church meeting and who therefore, as we have seen, received the church

[18] *Teaching of the Apostles. Sec. 15.*

offerings. Doubtless then as now the older men had usually more to give than the young and more wisdom in its distribution. And in spite of the enthusiasts there was a reverence for experience and age in those days greater than in ours. The group of elders commonly dominated the gatherings of the churches and the older churches instinctively took the same attitude of authority to the newer churches that the older Christians took to the newer Christians. The bishops, then the bishop, gradually became their spokesman, the representative to those outside as well as to those within, of established and ancient and orthodox Christianity. Soon the bishops came to be regarded as the sacred representatives of the apostles. Even "The Acts of the Apostles" informs us that the apostles *appointed* elders in every church—at least about Lystra, Iconium and Antioch.[19] Clement confirms this, only substituting bishops and deacons for elders, and affirms that such appointment was prophesied by Isaiah who said: "I will appoint their bishops in righteousness and their deacons in faith."[20] Regarding their appointment as going back thus pretty well to the beginning of things and as the goal of the divine will, it is no wonder that he regarded the church of Corinth as guilty of "no light sin for thrusting out those who had offered the gifts of the bishops' office holily." For we

[19] *Acts 14 : 23.*
[20] *To the Corinthians. Sec. 42.*

read in his letter: "Our apostles knew through the Lord that there would be strife over the name of the bishop's office. For this cause, therefore, having received complete foreknowledge, they appointed the aforesaid and afterwards they provided a continuance, that if these should fall asleep, other approved men should succeed to their ministration. Those who were appointed by them or afterwards by men of repute with the consent of the whole church—these men we consider to be unjustly ejected."[21] The ending is somewhat lame, it is true, but surely the passage prepares us for the unblushing declarations of the great bishop Ignatius on his way to martyrdom—of which repeated declarations these samples must suffice. "We ought to regard the bishop as the Lord Himself."[22] "Be ye zealous to do all things in godly concord, the bishop presiding after the likeness of God and the presbyters after the likeness of the council of the apostles with the deacons also who are most dear to me."[23] It was only about forty or fifty years later that Irenæus could point to the apostolic churches as sure repositories of Christian doctrine, because their bishops were in direct and continuous succession from the apostles.[24]

Curiously enough we have a close parallel to the apostolic succession of Christian bishops

[21] *To the Corinthians. Sec. 44.*
[22] *Epistle to the Ephesians. Sec. 6.*
[23] *Epistle to the Magnesians. Sec. 6.*
[24] *The Writings of Irenaeus (Ante-Nicene Library), Vol. I, pp. 260–264.*

in the Mosaic succession of Jewish Rabbis. In the Midrasch to Genesis, from about the sixth century, we read that Moses imparted the Holy Ghost to the Elders of Israel without lessening his own supply and that from that time on each teacher had lit his torch from his predecessor. Weber informs us from his studies in the Talmud that this lighting of the torch refers to the ceremony of ordination. It is indeed distinctly said in Sanhedrin 14 that in the time of Hadrian the last famous teacher had ordained five elders for the express purpose of preserving the succession of the Spirit.[25] In the third century the Mechilta proclaims that to receive a Rabbi means to receive the Shekina of God. And the practice of the Jews, so thoroughly in accord with this theory, is proof enough that something much akin to apostolic succession gave to the Jewish Rabbi the authority and standing of a Christian bishop. As the theory was developed much at the same time as that of the apostolic succession, it is presumable that even the Jews were not free from the extravagant teachings of spirit-filled enthusiasts and that Mosaic succession like apostolic succession was the refuge of the orthodox. But there is one essential distinction between the Jewish and the Christian situations. The whole atmosphere of late Judaism was legalistic; the Thora was the authority and the keeping of it the way to salvation. In the Gentile

[25] *Ferdinand Weber: System der Altsynagogalen Palästinischen Theologie p. 123.*

Christian churches, though from the first there were always those who regarded the Gospel as the new law, Christianity had arisen as a life given by a risen Lord, had put down the movement for all external standards, and was marked by a joy and a vitality altogether foreign to the remnant of the Jews. Before therefore we attempt to explain the authority of the bishops from their function as preservers of order, by moderating in meetings of enthusiasts and by deciding about doctrine, we must turn to the third avenue from democracy to episcopacy and examine the rights of the pastor or bishop at the Eucharist.

If at any point we long for full records of the early church, it is regarding its conception of the Lord's Supper and its customary celebration thereof. And nowhere are the records so meager. It will take us less time than we wish to record the facts regarding the connection of the bishop with the Eucharist. From Paul's counsel to the Corinthians, "Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat (the Lord's Supper), wait one for another,"[26] it is clear that no one in particular was designated to preside at the feast and to offer the thanksgiving; various groups of Christians partook at their convenience. At the time of Justin, as we have seen, there was one who presided, who received the offerings and who later distributed them to the poor. In the Teaching of

[26] *1 Cor. 11 : 33.*

the Apostles a prescribed prayer of thanksgiving at the Eucharist is given in full and then we read: "But permit the prophets to offer thanksgiving as much as they desire."[27] And Justin tells us that to pronounce the thanksgiving was the privilege of the presiding officer.[28] In this same document, immediately after the directions for the Eucharist, the churches are counselled to elect bishops and deacons, and not to despise them, for they can perform the service of prophets and teachers.[29] Ignatius commands: Let that be held a valid Eucharist which is under the bishop or one to whom he shall have committed it.[30] From that time on the language regarding the bishops becomes more and more priestly in tone. In the Teaching of the Apostles we are told that the prophets are the chief priests of the Christian and are to receive the first-fruits, and that if there be no prophets in any church, the first-fruits are to go to the poor.[31] But from the time of Ignatius, the bishops, who took the place of the prophets at the Eucharist, are more and more addressed as priests and given control of the alms of the church, until we hear Cyprian speaking of the bishops constantly and naturally as the priests of God.[32] These are

[27] *Teaching of the Apostles. Sec. 10.*
[28] *Apology. Chapter 67.*
[29] *Teaching of the Apostles. Sec. 15.*
[30] *To the Smyrnaeans. Sec. 8.*
[31] *Teaching of the Apostles. Sec. 13.*
[32] *Writings of Cyprian (Ante-Nicene Library), Vol. I, pp. 120, 164, 226, 243, etc. On the whole subject cf. Sohm: Kirchenrecht, Vol. I, pp. 66-69, 205-211.*

meager facts, but I think they justify us in saying that strong as was the desire for order and unity in the early church, and powerful as was the pastor or bishop as the official expression of that desire, it was only after he had obtained the exclusive right of presiding (or designating him who should preside) at the Eucharist that he became set apart from his brethren and by virtue of an ordination, in which the people had no share, received the Holy Spirit for the performance of an essentially priestly sacrifice in the Eucharist. In the words of Professor Allen: "The separation between clergy and laity (the authority for the clergy coming from a source external to the people) was deepened into an impassable barrier by Cyprian's doctrine of the sacerdotal character of the ministry." [33]

If we are right then in coming to the conclusion that the main avenue from democracy to episcopacy runs through the eucharist, and that it was because of the function of the bishop and his associates here, that there grew up a fatal and irretrievable class distinction in the Christian church, it remains for us to estimate the Christian character of the Eucharist, to inquire as to its meaning for the early church, and the source or at least the milieu from which that meaning came. Here again our sources are meager, though somewhat more clear than on the connection of the bishop with

[33] *Christian Institutions, p. 124.*

the feast. The Corinthian Christians, apparently in harmony with other Gentile Christians, believed that the bread and wine gave them the same fellowship with the body and blood of Christ that their heathen contemporaries in the various mystery-religions believed themselves to possess with their divinities through similar rites.[34] Paul himself undoubtedly believed that because the body of Christ, obtainable in the sacrament, had not been properly reverenced and received, some Corinthian Christians were smitten with disease and others with death.[35] Out of many similar utterances of Ignatius I select these as the clearest indications of his belief: "Breaking one bread, which is the medicine of immortality and the antidote that one should not die but live for ever in Jesus Christ."[36] "Be ye careful therefore (for the avoidance of schism) to observe one Eucharist for there is one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ and one cup of union with his blood, there is one altar, as there is one bishop."[37] "They abstain from Eucharist and prayer because they allow not that the Eucharist is the flesh of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, which flesh suffered for our sins and which the Father of His goodness raised up."[38] There can therefore be but little doubt that from a very early time in the Christian church many of the converts believed that

[34] *1 Cor. 10 : 14–22.*
[35] *Ibid. 11 : 30.*
[36] *Ephesians 20.*
[37] *Philadelphians 4.*
[38] *Smyrnaeans 6.*

in partaking of the Lord's Supper, they were being nourished on the transformed and immortal flesh and blood of Christ.

Our final question is: From whence came this idea, final founder of the Christian clergy, eventual materializer of our faith?

In this age, it is certainly unnecessary to show how foreign the conception is to the thought of Jesus. Neither would it have arisen by a misunderstanding of the scene in the upper room or as a re-enactment of a passover-feast among men who were constantly expecting the return of their Lord from the skies. Whence then did this feasting on the immortal body of Jesus come to muddy the transparent living water of the Gospel? After what has been said regarding the prominent part played by the mystery-religions in the atmosphere of the early church, the answer is not difficult. In his brochure on "Baptism and the Eucharist in the Primitive Church" Heitmüller has collected certain interesting analogies between the Eucharist of the Church and the sacred meals of the mysteries. In these religious associations he tells us that common meals in honor of the god or of the founder or of a deceased patron play a prominent part. Just as Paul speaks of the table of the Lord, so the devotees of the heathen mysteries speak of the table of the Lord Serapis or of the God Herakles. To quote: "Men longed for purity and pardon, for immortality and divine life and for their mate-

rial guarantees. The mysteries supplied them in all sorts of ceremonies. We happen to know of two mystery-religions in the very territory of the missionary activity of Paul, which provided sacred meals for their worshippers. The servants of Mithras celebrated a meal consisting of bread and a cup (in this case of water) which had supernatural effects. The similarity of this meal with the Christian Eucharist was so striking that Justin (Martyr) averred that the devil had contrived it. And similarly the worshippers of Attis recognized a holy meal as the center of their mysteries. The details escape us, but it is certain that in the missionary territory of Paul, particularly in Syria and Asia Minor, the belief in the mediation of divine powers through eating and drinking was widespread."[39] The Lord's Supper, as the church of the second century understood it, was one of a genus that had little in common with Christianity.

We are forced then, are we not, to this conclusion, that the three avenues which lead from primitive Christian democracy or theocracy to mediæval episcopacy and papacy are the control of the finances, the regulation of undue and unmoral ecstasies, and the rights in a peculiarly divine feast. The priesthood of the bishop and those associated with him may have been due, in part, as Sohm believes, to the fact that the

[39] *Heitmüller: Taufe und Abendmahl im Urchristentum, p. 73, cf. pp. 23ff.*

bishop was regarded as the steward of God, because he controlled the natural gifts which in Sohm's view were regarded as God's property and not as the property of the church. But Sohm insists that that control of God's property that was lodged in the bishop was a consequence of his presiding over the Eucharist.[40] The priesthood of the bishop, too, was undoubtedly prepared for by his authority in putting down the extravagances of those under the control of the spirit at the church gathering, and of his leadership against the inroads of pagan mysticism. But the priesthood of the bishop was actually founded by the mystery of the Eucharist, an institution transformed from its original intent by the atmosphere of the time, created as that atmosphere was by the mystery-religions, from which so many of the converts came. In other words it is impossible for us to disguise the fact that just as the church was in large part founded by its persecutors, so the Christian ministry was in large part established as a clergy by the heathen religions of the first centuries.

The basis of this institution was not Christian, but upon that basis has been built one of the most splendid religious edifices ever erected in this world. It culminated in the Papacy and in the Holy Catholic Church, with its earthly capitol at Rome. Before it, every religious man should bow with greatest reverence. As

[40] *Kirchenrecht, Vol. I, pp. 66–81.*

time went on the bishop as the presiding officer of an individual church, or as we should say a pastor, developed into the presiding officer of a central church and its outstations, much as a missionary upon our foreign fields to-day. Then a bishop became a superintendent of a diocese and eventually, much against Cyprian's will, these bishops became a regular hierarchy with archbishops to rule it and with the Pope as chief priest above all. This hierarchy retained supervision over the finances of the churches and soon there came to be a genuine Catholic treasury or at least a Catholic control. Much more important, however, than any matter of finance, these bishops retained their rights in the sacrament. Over it they presided or ordained those who should represent them at that solemn and life-giving sacrifice. There came thus to be a vast spiritual organization of the civilized world. It incarnated the great idea of a supreme spiritual fellowship which spanned all national divisions and which made men realize a common human life. The word humanity for the first time sprang into sight of men on a large scale. It deepened and sanctified every individual life, for each was a citizen of a vast City of God. And this human life common to all was no earthly life. It was an immortal one. And to the immortal element, all that was of this world was subsidiary. The Holy Catholic Church fixed the eyes of men upon their spiritual being. To it was com-

mitted an eternal food which it could impart to all men and women and children, assuring them of immortal bliss but also bestowing upon them in this present world an immortal flesh which should gradually transform their own. Everywhere men were in touch with God. Every day His power could break forth through them into miraculous announcements of His presence and favor. No electric cars were built nor superdreadnoughts, neither was sanitation or surgery in the foreground of men's attention. But generations of men were produced which have made it impossible for the generations that have followed and that will follow to regard themselves as animals and which have given men those motives and impulses which alone assure progress and vitality. And in this great spiritual fellowship, the men of the spirit, the magicians of the spirit if you choose, were the rulers and leaders. Monarchs and courts were their servants, raised up to do the lower work of the world, and utterly under their hands to bless or to ruin. The secular was subordinate to the spiritual, trade to religion. Never before and never since, until the Anabaptists rose in Zürich or perhaps not until the Mayflower sailed for Plymouth or perhaps never at all, has a greater ecclesiastical idea dominated the minds of men. For if this be indeed a spiritual life which we lead together, the spiritual must manifestly and admittedly and universally have charge of the material. The men who

best embody religion must control, though they need not manage, the affairs of men. And all this vast empire of the soul the Holy Catholic Church symbolized and in a large measure incarnated. With what it deemed a historical and with what was an unquestioned right, it stood as the representative of God in the world. It dimly pointed to a mysterious but historic Christ, who had showed that the earthly life was only the transparent shell of the divine; it covered him up by his miraculous birth and by his cross, but those were better coverings than trappings of luxury and lust. It united and organized and spiritualized mankind. What wonder that it still lives to-day! What wonder that it looks down upon sects and despises less catholic and less venerable priesthoods and liturgies! What wonder that from the throne of its high accomplishments, its undying zeal and its truly Catholic hope, it despises Anglican orders and exterminates Modernism as a doctor cuts out a mole! It lives because it embodies in the most visible and affecting form the supremacy of religion over animalism, and the universal and immortal fellowship of men. It insists upon and it visualizes the authority of conscience and God; it directs the ignorant; it holds all men together. No religious man should stand aloof from its mighty history, its transcendent hopes, its vast and permanent achievements. Like much other religion in the world, it is not Chris-

tian; it must therefore be transformed and purified. But only when Christianity becomes as vast and purer, only when men live by the passion of Jesus as Catholics have lived by the passion for immortal life, only when Christianity rules our individual spirits and a multitude of individual spirits, as the Roman Church ruled the early centuries, will Jesus see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied.

LECTURE III

THE BEGINNINGS OF NATIONAL CHURCHES

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The great ideal which erected the papacy held Western Europe in a spiritual fellowship, almost unbroken, for centuries. Even an extreme Protestant must be awed by its strength, its fine accomplishment and its vaster promise. In so vast a fabric, he feels inclined to think that room for the diversest growth of individualism might have been found. Its fall seems even to him a calamity and the cause of widespread disaster and confusion. The unity of Western civilization was endangered; for what was believed to be Christendom the nation was substituted as object of allegiance and protector of rights. While through the fall of the Papacy, religious thought became freer, religion itself from being regarded as the mistress of the world became the arm of the state. The price we paid for the freedom of the mind was the secularisation not only of the State but of the Church.

It is our present task to trace the rise of what seems to me the most inadequate of all the historical forms of church organization, the church of a delimited nation.

I desire, perhaps somewhat arbitrarily, to limit my subject. I do not think that the Roman Catholic or Greek Catholic churches properly fall under the caption of National Churches. That they were in official relation with the State is undeniable, but the State with which they were related was not delimited; ideally and dogmatically speaking, the State was Catholic in character and made some pretension at being world-wide in its scope. We are not considering the principle of Establishment, per se, but of a limited national establishment. But I also desire to exclude from consideration the ancient Eastern Churches, both because their history would take us far afield from our own immediate interests and also because these churches did not definitely fall away from a universal church for the sake of establishing a narrow, national organization. The Armenian Church existed as a national church from its inception and other eastern churches arose on doctrinal grounds, becoming national only incidentally and perhaps somewhat gradually. What I desire to consider is the formation of Protestant churches which consciously split off from a larger whole and which took shape according to the boundaries of their civil governments.

We Americans have never been conscious of much exaggeration in Longfellow's familiar lines upon our country:

"Humanity with all its fears,
With all the hopes of future years,
Is hanging breathless on thy fate!
Our hearts, our hopes are all with thee,
Our hearts, our hopes, our prayers, our tears,
Our faith triumphant o'er our fears,
Are all with thee, are all with thee!"

But surely if there was ever a human institution to which without apparent blasphemy these words could be addressed it was the Holy Catholic Church of the West with its high traditions, its glorious cathedrals, its rich literature, its sacred liturgy, its noble saints, its effective and proven organization. Only a combination of the strongest causes could have produced its fall. Only in an upheaval of Christian civilization could the most precious structure of the ages perish. In the time at our disposal it is possible only to mention in the briefest fashion four great grounds of its fall.

The first, of course, is the manifest disloyalty of the leaders of the Church to their sublime ideal. The ideal was too large for men to support. The Popes instead of seeking to serve the Ideal sought to make the Ideal serve the most narrow and trivial of interests. More compelling than the sublimity of their vast Ideal was the affection that bound them to their kin, the lust that drew them to their forbidden offspring, the love of luxury that substituted splendor for purity. In support of

this assertion we have only time to cite a very few instances from the long catalogue which Henry C. Lea has so laboriously gathered. Sixtus IV bestowed upon a nephew of his not only an archbishopric but at the same time seven bishoprics and two abbacies. To another nephew, a Cardinal and a libertine, he gave a group of bishoprics yielding 60,000 ducats a year (the actual value of the gold in the coin being over $125,000). He pawned his sacred tiara for gold and redeemed it by creating 18 new secretaries, and forcing each one to pay him 2,600 florins. Leo X, Luther's Pope, appointed 60 chamberlains from whom he exacted in payment for their offices 74,000 ducats. The holder of every benefice throughout Europe was forced to return a stipulated sum to the Pope who, for ease of collection, employed the Fugger banking house at Augsburg for 50 per cent. of the total. Confessors in the Hospital of San Giovanni on almost indisputable authority are said to have notified the physicians of the wealth of their various patients, the richest of whom were systematically poisoned. Innocent VIII and Alexander VI gave public weddings for their own illegitimate daughters. Concubinage of the priests was quite universal. Large sums of money for crusades against the infidel, purchased by the sale of indulgences, which guaranteed freedom from criminal prosecution here as well as from purgatorial pains hereafter, were applied to

current expenses of the Papal court and the aggrandizement of the Papal families. It is not strange that nepotism, the form of family enrichment which is most in favor with supposedly childless clergy, has become the best known word to describe the most shameless graft. But we must take only so much further time as is necessary to outline the career of the son of Rene II, Duke of Lorraine. At three years of age, he was appointed coadjutor to his uncle, the Bishop of Metz. At ten years of age he succeeded to the bishopric. He resigned it after a while in favor of his own nephew, aged four. At nineteen, he became also Bishop of Toul and at twenty Bishop of Terouanne also and Cardinal by grace of the Pope. In the next five years he added three more bishoprics, including that of Verdun. His avarice still unsatisfied, he became Archbishop of Narbonne, Reims and Lyons without resigning any of his bishoprics. Truly catholic in his tastes, he added thirteen abbeys to his rule. His extravagances throughout life were so great that notwithstanding his large income he was always poor.[1] When we consider that these various offices assigned to papal favorites were often farmed out to the highest bidder, who in his turn auctioned off his pile of sacred offices, we can understand how to the people who paid dear for heartless services the Church began

[1] *For these and similar facts, cf. Cambridge Modern History, Vol. I. Chapter XIX.*

to be the exploiter instead of the sanctifier of the religious life of men, a splendid burden instead of a liberator and savior. Had the Church insisted upon being the friend of men, I do not, for one, believe that the Christian Revolution would have been possible.

The second, though quite subordinate, cause of the fall of the Catholic Church was that large movement for the advancement of the human intellect and for the release of the spontaneity of the human heart that the word Renaissance is employed to cover. Its center was, of course, the discovery of the classics of the Greeks and Romans. Here, before the Church or its Lord had ever worked upon the hearts of men, there was unexpectedly exhibited to the world, that had begun to feel the bondage of the church, a pure delight in nature and in the development of human character and of human society that was astounding. The high ideals of the human mind in Plato and Virgil and Cicero and Seneca and the joy and nobility of heart that their writings evinced, the largeness and childlikeness of Homer, the glimpses at the beauty and charm of the antique world, all made the perhaps unacknowledged appeal of a freer, gladder day to men suddenly aware of living in prison. The leaders of the Church and of the Universities abandoned themselves almost without reserve to the earthly Paradise of which they seemed to catch a first vision and men began to be bound together on high levels

of feeling by ties which had absolutely no connection with Christ or the Church. The life thus revealed seemed more full of promise and delight than any which their religion had ever offered them. Human nature did not seem as evil as the Church had found it or perchance even had maintained it. It could be trusted as well as the divine instruction of the priest; it needed expansion more than redemption. With the discovery of the Classics went also the discovery of the Early Fathers and the inevitable conviction spread abroad that the church of the primitive days and the majestic and debauched institution of their time had but very little in common. In the famous anonymous dialogue of Peter and Pope Julius, the Pope is represented as shuddering at the very thought of being "reduced to the level of the Apostles."[2] The freedom of the intellectual air and the dawning perception of the worth of an individual human being, made men wonder if the Church were a refuge or a prison, the guide or the seducer of the spirit.

Mere distrust of the Church, however, would not have produced her ruin. She stood for too vital an element in human life for that. Matching these two negative influences there were at least two constructive forces at work which assured her terrible chastisement. The first of these, of course, was the individual religious experience of Martin Luther.

[2] *Froude: Life and Letters of Erasmus, p. 158.*

Into this sublime event in the history of mankind it is neither possible nor necessary to enter. At nearly every one of the vital turning-points in the organization of the Church, there stands a personal revelation of God. Behind the founding of the Church stands the experience of Jesus with God; with the deliberate freeing of the Church from racial limitations there stands connected the experience of Paul with God; sanctifying the arrogance of the bishopric stands the experience of Ignatius with God and with death; as a commentary upon the rise of Catholicism there stands the experience of Augustine with God, and behind its fall, the experience of Luther with God. I do not mean that these personal experiences were equally determinative of the outer movements of the church; but the personal character of our religion manifests itself in the fact that at these vast turns in its historical course we find the supporting strength of the revelation of God in the soul of an individual man. Of all these personal experiences, the experience of Luther was most patently and immediately determinative of a change in the organization of religion. The experience of Jesus, as we have seen, though, of course, standing behind the founding of the Church, stood a good distance behind it; the experience of Paul occurred after the first steps in the formation of a Church, untrammeled by the Jewish State; the experience of Augustine also was a reinforcement of a movement al-

ready under way, though a reinforcement of determinative power; but the experience of Luther was at once translated into the sphere of Church organization by Luther himself. The experience of God in his own soul was to him so authoritative and unquestionable and satisfying, that it was impossible to modify or obscure or support it by the holiest traditions of the Church. What the Church was in the world to do for men, God had done for him in the church but apart from its supposedly indispensable organization. He believed that his experience of God was in harmony with these other personal revelations of God to which I have referred, but there was nothing about any of them that depended upon the consent of the Roman Catholic or Greek Catholic Churches; the church organization could not therefore be regarded as essential to the revelation of God in the soul of man and the redemption of man by the Spirit of God. "What," he says, "is the entire gospel other than the good tidings of the forgiveness of sins? . . . Neither the Pope nor Bishop nor any man has the right to command a Christian even by a syllable without his consent."[3] After his experience with God, he knew how divine a thing a Christian was. It was to him a blasphemy that any one who, through the will of God, had obtained the freedom of a Christian should be controlled

[3] *Von der Babylonischen Gefangenschaft der Kirche. See Rade's Luther, Vol. I, pp. 689, 692.*

even by so holy an institution as the Church. A man who, free from sin and care and death, could commune with God as a child with a father, had escaped from the Babylonish Captivity of Rome. When Luther summarized the two parts of the gladdest Christian book ever written thus: "A Christian is an absolutely free lord of all things and subject to no man. A Christian is an absolutely bounden servant of all things and subject to every man,"[4] he laid grounds deep enough and revolutionary enough to make inevitable the establishment of a new Christian fellowship in the world. If any human words are worthy to be set alongside of the two commandments of Jesus, those words of Luther must be chosen. What God wrought in the soul of a miner's son rent the Christian Church in twain and made inevitable the freedom and fellowship in which we stand.

By no means so important as this experience of Martin Luther with God, but more determinative of the form of the organization which this experience produced than the experience itself, was the last of the four causes of the Papacy's fall. It is the most important for our purpose and therefore upon it we must now concentrate our attention; I refer to the growth of national consciousness.

Even the noble ideal of the Papacy had never been able to repress the consciousness of dif-

[4] *Von der Freiheit eines Christenmenschen. See Rade's Luther, Vol. I, p. 721.*

ference of racial temperament, racial needs and racial aspirations in its wide domain. Schism was always dreaded and often met by it. And yet at times it seemed as if the world were but a body for the Roman soul. The Latin language became the universal language of scholarship, of inter-communication between all classes of divers races, of worship. Men really began to do their thinking in a medium which required no translation; it looked as if the world of thought were really to be one. Peasants everywhere began to be accustomed to its sound in worship and to regard it as the language of devotion and of the angels. Their rulers used the language and relied upon the authority of Rome. These rulers were not kings but satraps; they each kept order for the viceregent of Christ and for the strengthening of His kingdom against the infidels. Usually they ruled only over small areas, lived without pomp, and divided their time pretty equally between the chase of beasts and the repression of brigands. Everywhere the presence of the priest told of a higher power and often the presence of monks that of greater luxury. Europe seemed indeed to be, if not a commonwealth of man, at least a federation of the world. Rome, as a court of last resort, antedates the Hague Tribunal. It promulgated decisions, even if they were but rarely enforced.

But gradually this state of affairs became threatened by clashing interests of large num-

bers of people. Loyalties arose which came into conflict with the loyalty to the head of the Church. The growth of a kind of dawning nationalism is hard to trace; there is apparently no adequate treatment of this subject extant; we must simply indicate some factors in its rise.

And certainly a most important factor in the growth of national consciousness is the enlarging of the areas of secular control. In order to keep the peace, the knights or barons of a neighborhood combined together. After a long time, there came to be a federation or confederation or principality or kingdom in place of a smaller unit of territory. Or an elected king would really make his power felt in the territory over which he held only theoretic rights before. Then the prince or king would become a sufficiently great figure to appeal to the imaginations of men, and he would deliberately emphasize the peculiar need of his own territory over against the interests of territories near by and over against the advantage of Christendom as a whole. The Pope began to be regarded in Germany and England and even in France not as the Father of the people but as a foreign monarch, ruling over a distant realm and intent on the interests of the region near his papal seat. The Bishops seemed much more concerned with their own personal standing at Rome than with the condition of their own peoples. The prince, at least, strengthened the

section over which he ruled and expended his wealth among his own people; the bishop forwarded the taxes of the church in great part to Rome and frowned upon the growing feeling of independence among the subjects and at the court of great princes. The common man began to feel that his interests were not identical with the interests of Christendom and that his interests must first be met. The ideal of the Papacy was too vast and vague for men; though still far from even dreaming of Hegel's conception of the National State as the kingdom of heaven upon earth, they began to feel that the needs of localities differed and that the needs must be met by the people of the localities themselves.

The rise of the Mohammedan power and its conquest of Constantinople and the discovery of America and its colonization served to emphasize the divergent interests and powers of the nations and to destroy that unity of feeling upon which, and out of which, the Papacy grew. Roughly speaking, the statement of Drury may be accepted as true: "Europe was no longer capable of uniting, as at the eleventh century, in one great religious thought, nor was she yet in condition to act in concert for a grand political idea. At the middle of the fifteenth century there was not a single general question which could rally all the governments; there was not even any great force to rally the peoples about a principle. However this force existed and in

France, always the vanguard of Europe, it was already acting. It was *royalty* which was to draw each state from feudal chaos, to secure internal order, to prepare equality, and through the encouragement given to commerce, manufactures, letters and arts, to aid in the development of a new civilization."[5] If we take "royalty" in a broad sense, to include the sovereignty of cities in Switzerland and of principalities in Germany, reinforced by the ideal of the Empire, the statement may stand at about its face value. The secular power grew in extent and in its appeal to the imagination; it became virtually coincident with the conception of a nation; it was helped by the furtherance of literatures in the languages of the peoples; out of the anarchy, which the weakening of the Papacy left, grew the compact and fighting nations. It was just as this national consciousness was forming that Luther had that personal experience with God out of which grew the great Protestant revolution in religion.

It now becomes our duty to show, if we may, how the freedom of the Christian man, which Luther experienced and for which he so greatly suffered and contended, became the means by which the Church, once the acknowledged queen of the state, became its humble subject.

For this sorry plight, Luther himself cannot be altogether acquitted of blame. He had no desire that the freedom of the Christian man

[5] *History of Modern Times* (*Grosvenor's edition*), *p. 7.*

should weaken the authority of the Christian prince. National impulses mixed themselves with purely religious ones in Luther's mind, from the beginning. The same year which saw the publication of "The Freedom of the Christian Man" and "The Babylonish Captivity of the Church" saw also his address to the German Nobility summoning them to come to the aid of the captive Church. In that famous appeal occur many words of a distinctly patriotic brand, like these: "Now that the cardinals have sucked Wales dry, they enter German territory. They begin most politely but, observe, German land will soon be like the Welsh. We already have some cardinals; what the Romans are after they think that the drunken Germans will not understand, until they have no bishopric, monastery, manse, heller or pfennig left; the mad gluttons of Germans must stand it. Some people believe that more than three hundred thousand gulden leave Germany every year for Rome in vain, for which we get nothing but scorn and mocking. We keep wondering why our princes, our nobles, our cities and institutions, our land and people are so poor; we ought rather to wonder that we still have anything to eat. It is time that the German nation, its bishops and princes, should regard itself also as a Christian people and should guard from such devouring wolves the multitude that is committed to it to rule and defend in good things, bodily and spiritual. O noble

princes and gentlemen, how long will you leave your land and people at the mercy of these devouring wolves! Every prince, nobleman, city, should at once prohibit their subjects from sending the annates to Rome.[6] As though among all the Christians on earth, the Germans should be the clowns of the Pope and suffer what no other folk will stand. We have the name, the title and the coat of arms of Empire, but the Pope has its treasure and power. The Pope has the kernel and we play with the shells. Let the Pope give up Rome and all that he has taken from the empire, give our land a rest from tax and oppression, give back to us our freedom, power, honor, bodies and souls, and let it be an empire indeed. Has not our noble nation been led by the nose long enough?"[7] There is much of the secular mixed with the religious in the appeal of this great spiritual revolutionist.

Through the years which followed this appeal, Luther steered a course which is rather difficult to follow. When some of the nobles took up arms to free the country, Luther, of whose sympathy they felt assured, strenuously besought them to lay them down. He insisted that the Word of God should be free to win its own victories. When, inspired in part at least by a new sense of spiritual worth, the peasants took up arms against the oppression

[6] *The first year's revenue of a new clerical appointee.*
[7] *Printed in Rade's Luther, Vol. I, pp. 597–673. For these quotations see pp. 612, 613, 614, 617, 623, 629, 667.*

of their rulers, fully as tyrannical as the Pope, Luther denounced them as reckless anarchists. The Word must have free course. When imprisoned in the Wartburg, his followers in Wittenberg, now in a great majority in the place, sought to conform public worship to the new teachings by force, Luther left his seclusion and at the risk of life insisted that the old Roman practices should be tolerated for the sake of brotherly love. The Word had not yet won its own way. For most of their respective lives his prince, Frederick the Wise, and he thoroughly agreed. The Word was to have free course and the prince was to give it liberty. But after some years had gone by, there came a time when Luther thought the Word had won its way sufficiently to be given entire control of public worship and of church institutions. Hence he demanded that, for the sake of public peace, Roman masses should be suppressed by secular force both in the monastery and in the court church. He claimed that public order was endangered by allowing the few stubborn Stiftsherren who resisted the Word to continue in their practises. Frederick refused to intervene, on Luther's own ground that a Prince must not interfere with religion, lest he should be fighting spiritual battles with carnal weapons. This incensed Luther, who was now emphasizing the duty of the prince to public order. When Frederick died and was succeeded by the Elector John, Luther had his

way. John believed that it was his duty as a Prince to preserve public order and that it was his duty as a Christian Prince to see that the Lord was not blasphemed in the mass. Luther and he agreed that while the conscience was to be ruled only by the Lord, and while a man should be free to worship in private as he pleased, public worship, public religious instruction, public religious funds from monasteries, etc., and even the nomination of evangelical bishops lay in the hands of the prince. In holding this position, Luther was really falling back on a general custom of his Province of Saxony which was in vogue before his time. In the breakdown of ecclesiastical authority, Luther, who hated anarchy, had recourse to the only authority there was. The Christian congregation was to give its assent to the call of a minister and should normally take the initiative in all changes of church practise, but the Christian, that is, the Evangelical, Prince was the Protector, a kind of forced bishop, indeed, of the Church, and must see to its welfare. From his standpoint, Luther claimed that a Catholic prince should give the Word an opportunity to reform the community, though not being a Christian prince, he was in no position to put a stop to the blasphemy of the Catholic—or rather, devilish—mass. But this position was not practical; Catholic and Evangelical had to come to some agreement that would go on all fours and soon Luther

found himself forced to agree to the position that there should be but one mode of public worship in each principality.[8] Public order, in other words, had triumphed over individual freedom and eventually the religion of the subjects was determined by the religion of the prince. Here, therefore, began that aristocratic tinge in the church founded by the great democrat, Luther. The power of the Pope was destroyed, but each individual prince became a little Protestant Pope instead. The main object of Lutheran ministers became the conversion of Princes, in order that they might later convert their subjects. The fate and regulation of religion, in other words, passed from an official representative of its own to the representative of the secular power. This change can only be regarded by religious men as a necessary visitation of Providence for the purifying of religion, a new Babylonish exile from its promised land. A Church state is a perfectly possible ideal; a State church is the renunciation of the ideal. It is putting the Church under the heels of the State.

Nor do we find a very different state of affairs in Zürich, the only other spot in Europe that can lay claim to being an independent center of Protestant faith. The chapter in the Cambridge Modern History which deals with the Swiss Reformation opens with this clear statement: "The Helvetic Reformation, like the

[8] *Cf. Rade's Luther, Vol. III, Book 5.*

German, was the outcome of both the national history and the Renaissance."[9] Zwingli found Zürich a city independent of all foreign control in secular affairs and granted by the Pope no mean control of its clergy. Zwingli, as a matter of course, appealed to the magistracy of the city as to the last authority in all religious and ecclesiastical questions. Disputations between him and the bishop of Constance were heard by the city council as a court of last resort; the question of the mass, of images, of tithes, of the partaking of meat in Lent, were all decided by this body. The decrees of the burgomaster and the magistracy decided all matters concerning the state, its religious practises and military practises alike. In the famous confession of faith which Zwingli sent to Charles V, he declares: "I know the magistrate, when properly inaugurated, holds God's place no less than the prophet."[10] With Luther, Zwingli distinguished between the true and the external church, and believed that the external church is guided in the Providence of God by the real church embosomed within it, but he himself asserted that for legislative purposes, the local church of any city is represented by the board of magistrates of the city. One of his earliest theses, at the basis of all his work, ran thus: "All that the so-called spiritual order claims to belong to it of right and for the

[9] *Cambridge History, Vol. II, p. 305.*
[10] *Printed in Appendix to S. M. Jackson's Huldreich Zwingli, p. 479.*

protection of the right, belongs to the secular arm, when it is Christian."[11] There can be therefore little wonder about Zwingli's absorption in statesmanship, about his eagerness for war, about his endeavors to form a large international confederacy with Zürich as its center. The State was the Church and the Kingdom of God was to come through uniting Christian States. Zwingli's republicanism saves his church from being a creature of the prince, as it became under Luther, but its authority was lodged in the secular government and exercised by men who were chosen not for their competency for its affairs alone. It was strictly national, although perhaps we may say that it was more nearly the State itself than an appendage of the State. There was little room for divergent types of belief and piety; Anabaptists in Zürich were dealt with as enemies of the government; to think for oneself about religion tended to lead one into crime against the state.

When we turn our eyes to England, we come on a far sorrier picture. There are few more disgraceful performances in history than the secession of the English Church from Rome.

Exhausted by the long civil strife of the Wars of the Roses, the weakened barons and the impoverished country were more than content to allow the rough and ready Edward IV to rule without the counsel of Parliament and

[11] *Given in Jackson's Zwingli, p. 184.*

to establish unquestioned authority in the land. Henry VII, uniting in his own person the lineage of both Lancaster and York, continued to increase the power and prestige of the monarchy. At the accession of Henry VIII, a well-filled treasury, the possession of the single train of artillery in the kingdom and the good will and confidence of the conspicuous scholars of the Renaissance made the King the one commanding figure of the Kingdom. The creation of his adoring minister, Wolsey, as Papal Legate, accustomed even churchmen to look to the Court of the King instead of to Rome for ecclesiastical decisions. Adored at home, Henry wished to be mightier abroad. His wife, Catharine, was the aunt of the Emperor Charles, and Henry had expected to share in his conquests. Charles however treated Henry with disdain, and Wolsey thought a French alliance would be better than the Spanish one. Hence he sought to induce the Pope to allow Henry to divorce his Spanish wife. The Pope temporized, but finally refused. Meanwhile Henry, unaccustomed to restraint, grew infatuated with a lady of his court, and pressed the demand for a divorce no longer to strengthen his kingdom but to satisfy his own heart. It seemed to him monstrous that a Pope at Rome should interfere with the will of the King. His lady-love grew impatient with Wolsey, the Papal legate, and he fell. Cromwell, one of Wolsey's friends, suggested to the King that he take

the reins into his own hand and cut loose from the only power that presumed to dictate to him. Thus, on the desire of a profligate and able King for a divorce, the Church of England *as a separated church* was founded. The entire church, it is true, seceded. It still maintained its ancient rites and customs and orders. But it was a different church, because it recognized a different supreme authority. The Pope was no longer its supreme head. And there can be no doubt that Henry caused the convocation of clergy to pronounce him supreme head of the Church, in order that he might divorce Catherine and wed Anne Boleyn. There were no doubt causes which contributed to this secession from the Papal institution. Colet had not discovered and preached the simplicity of Jesus in vain. The impoverishment of the land by the monasteries and of the monasteries by the Pope stirred discontent with what came to be regarded as foreign domination of the church by the Pope. But the real foundation of the Church of England was the new conception of the majesty and authority of the King of the Nation and the chance desire of that Nation's king to do something prohibited by the church. The maxims which More mentions in the Utopia as prevalent in the land are symptoms of the satisfaction in the new national strength and sovereignty, to wit, to use his language, "the maxim that the king can do no wrong, however much he may wish to do it; that not

only the property but the persons of his subjects are his own; and that a man has a right to no more than the King's goodness thinks fit not to take from him."[12] It was this temper that led to the definite humiliation and plunder of the church which had been enriched by the humiliation and plunder of the barons. As Green says: "To reduce the great ecclesiastical body to a mere department of state, in which all authority should flow from the sovereign alone and in which his will should be the only law, his decision the only test of truth, was a change hardly to be wrought without a struggle,"[13] but it *was* wrought and the Act of Supremacy was duly and unanimously passed that "the King shall be taken, accepted and reputed the only supreme Head in earth of the Church of England and shall have annexed and united to the Imperial Crown of this realm as well the title and style thereof as all the honors, jurisdictions, authorities, immunities, profits and commodities to the said dignity belonging, with full power to visit, redress, reform and amend all such errors, heresies, abuses, contempts, and enormities, which by any manner of spiritual authority or jurisdiction, might or may lawfully be reformed."[14] There can be no doubt that as in Germany and Switzerland, the so-called Protestant Church of England was a product in its outward form of the national

[12] *Cited in Green's Short History of the English People, p. 333.*
[13] *Green's Short History, p. 344.*
[14] *Green: History of the English People. Vol. II, p. 159.*

development of the times. And even when in the reign of Edward VI and of Elizabeth the real spirit of Protestantism began to make itself felt in England, there was no suggestion of any save a State Church, regulated by Parliament and demanding uniformity throughout the nation. Had we time to examine the church in Geneva from which these later religious influences reached England and Scotland, we should find the case no different. Toleration was a sign of looseness of faith and courage. The State decided the belief and the religious practises of its subjects. If a man rendered unto Cæsar the things that were Cæsar's, then he could render to God what was God's, but only then. God still, to all intents and purposes, had a vicar on earth. It was not the Pope; he was Anti-Christ; but it was Cæsar. It is true there were many Cæsars and their rule was limited by definite geographical lines, but within those lines, they were supreme in establishing and maintaining the outward tests and ordinances of religion. Everywhere in Protestantism, religion became the subservient and generally the obsequious servant of the State.

Lord Acton has thus expressed the desperate situation: "Nations eagerly invested their rulers with every prerogative needed to preserve their faith and all the care to keep church and state asunder and to prevent the confusion of their powers, which had been the work of ages, were renounced in the intensity of the

crisis. . . . When the last of the Reformers died, religion, instead of emancipating the nations, had become an excuse for the criminal acts of despots."[15]

And I hardly think it an exaggeration to say that everywhere on Protestant territory the church became an arm of the state. It was forced into a subservient and often into an obsequious attitude. It hardened and even sanctified national divisions; it vastly aided racial prejudice; it helped to produce centuries of war. The present catastrophe in Europe is an outcome of governmental greed and suspicion, but most of the men in control of the policies of the governments now at war are devout and conscientious members of national churches and the deep distrust at the foundation of this carnage is not purely the distrust of one government for another but of one nation for another. And it seems to me quite impossible to acquit organized Christianity of aiding and abetting the greatest crime of the century. Unless we deny Christianity any influence over men's minds at all, we must reluctantly hold it, as organized under the suzerainty of the States, a guilty accomplice of wholesale murder. For in England and Germany the churches have been under the unquestioned guidance, control and support of the secular power. In Russia the Holy Orthodox Church, although, originally, not devoid of pretensions

[15] *History of Freedom and other Essays, pp. 43–44.*

to Catholicity, is to all intents and purposes a national church. Since 1700 there has been no Muscovite patriarch and the Czar has presided over the Holy Synod. The new Constitution of the Russian Church builds upon the absolute supremacy of the Czar, and the Holy Synod is simply a department of the national government. In these countries all the holy impulses of religion have magnified the nation and have often substituted patriotism for the brotherhood of man. It is true that Catholicism has done but little better in assuaging race hatred and that Austria, Italy and France are entangled in this fratricidal conflict. But it is only fair to point out that it is a divided and disrupted Catholic Church to which they have belonged. Protestantism split the ecclesiastical unity of mankind and substituted for it a system of organized public worship which has glorified those national divisions and conceptions which are among the greatest enemies of the essential spirit of Christianity. If there were anything needed to condemn the principle of a national church and of religious establishment under the control of a delimited state, this European War has supplied the need. The world cries out to-day either for a world-wide, a genuinely catholic *organization* of Christianity, on the one hand, or for a Church in which the catholic *spirit* of Jesus reigns and in which all national lines are ignored and obliterated on the other.

The Papacy must indeed have been corrupt to have fallen before so secular a conception of the Church as that which resulted in these national organizations. Had there not been hidden at the heart of the nations the principle of religious freedom, the Reformation of Luther might well have been termed the most sinister event in the history of Christianity.

Fortunately, there were men who held religion too high to allow it to be controlled by secular powers. And the remaining lectures in this course are devoted to a portrayal of their tragic personal fate and of their high and enduring accomplishments.

LECTURE IV

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE FREE CHURCHES

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The free church is no Protestant creation; the first church was free. The Jewish followers of the Nazarene, driven from the synagogue of the ancients, were not bound by the chains of the State. Free were they to worship and to fellowship as was revealed to them from their risen Lord. As they grew stronger, they began to be ferreted out by the imperial authorities for persecution. They had no thought of obeying the dictates of the State, no dream that it would ever carry out theirs. The State and they were scarcely enemies, but they were not friends. Yet in the course of time the State and Church captured each other—and weakened each other. Under Theodosius, at the close of the fourth century, the Empire and the Church began to coalesce and the fatal process culminated in the year 425, when Valentinian III decreed that all citizens of the Roman Empire should become Christians. The Pope did not decree that all Christians should be citizens of Rome; the Emperor decreed that all citizens should be followers of Christ. As outward force was the cause of unity, the world moulded

the church more than the church moulded the world. But since that fatal coalition, considerable groups of earnest Christians have not only expressed, but organized, their dissatisfaction at the conformity of the church to the world. Even before the Church made its surrender to the Empire, the Montanists broke away from its growing inflexibility and respectability in the interests of freedom for the Spirit and subjugation for the flesh. Just as their influence waned the Novatians arose on the issue of the laxity of the church, gathered into their fellowship the struggling remnants of the Montanists, and were dubbed the Catharoi (the pure) by their cynical opponents. Scarcely had these old Puritans grown weak under persecution and ostracism, when the widespread Donatist movement set in. This fellowship endured for well over a hundred years, until the very time in which Valentinian published his edict. It was marked by a more well-defined opposition to a worldly church than any of the earlier sects. It insisted on re-ordination and re-baptism of all who had been defiled by ecclesiastical association with those church officials who had proven faithless under the last great persecution to which the church was exposed. There was scarcely ever a time when the Roman Church was the sole representative of religion even in its own territory. Save perhaps in the 7th and 8th centuries, there were always earnest souls who felt that religion was not identical

with the church, and who desired a purer fellowship. It is hard, perhaps, to acquit them of a touch of Pharisaism but their souls were cramped by formalism and officialism. When the hardening influences of a stereotyped ecclesiasticism were reinforced by the authority of the State, the religious life of the Church became still further ossified; there was more reason for rebellion but a far graver risk in it. When the Church controlled the machinery of the State and when the State was insisting upon unity throughout its heterogeneous dominions, it seemed necessary to submit. To rebel meant to rob the inevitably victorious church of the few who were in earnest about their religion. In the words of an anonymous Romance tract of the 12th century: "The elect of God were captives in Babylon and served as gold with which Antichrist covered his vanity."[1] But though for a while new sects were not formed, the decreasing Donatists and the Priscillians, a Pietistic sect, continued until well into the latter half of the sixth century. The spirit represented by them, however, did not altogether die out, for in the beginning of the ninth century, the Paulicians, denouncing Sacramentalism and the worship of saints and relics, arose and flourished until in the 11th century they seem to have poured their strength into a Slavic movement of consider-

[1] *Quoted in Neander's History of the Christian Religion and Church (Torrey's translation), Vol. IV, p. 615.*

able significance, known as the Friends of God. Along the trade-lines from the East to the West, this movement spread in force and grew in power, until under the name of Catharists it virtually possessed Southern France and reached into Germany on the North and into Spain on the South. Thoroughly dualistic in its theology, it emphasized the necessity of the most stringent ascetism at least for its Apostles, who by a peculiar Sacrament received the power to forgive the sins of their followers. They denounced the worship and Sacraments of the church, the reading of the Old Testament, the worship of saints and the cross, and declared in unmistakable tones that all Catholic priests had committed the unpardonable sin. By the severity and abnegation of their lives and the power of their preachers, they gained the hearts of the people and maintained themselves well into the thirteenth century. Either among them or at one side of them, Peter of Bruis and Henry of Lausanne overwhelmed the priests with their mighty eloquence, and for the first time in history denounced not only the mass but the baptism of infants, insisting upon faith as necessary to church membership, and to the high title of Christian.[2] Before they had spent their force, the sudden death of a friend drove Peter Waldo to a study of the scriptures and to so strong a desire to proclaim

[2] *For a brief account of these Sects see Neander (Torrey): History of the Christian Religion, Vol. IV, pp. 553–604.*

their good tidings that the inhibition and even excommunication of the Pope had no weight either with him or his followers. By no means unhappy in the Roman church, and maintaining a close doctrinal resemblance to it, wonderfully free from vagaries of every sort, appealing but little to the imagination, with the instincts of Bible-readers yet condemned to be heretics, it seems indeed a freak of fate that of all these schismatics that have been mentioned, they alone have withstood all the violent persecutions directed against them and have remained unto this day. But, as we shall see, "come-outers" fail where "driven-outers" succeed. Perhaps the sanity of their communion protected them from extermination on the one hand and from any determining influence on the other. But this in all fairness we must say: without intending to, and without appearing to have the spiritual riches to justify it, it is to them that the world owes the first enduring free church of history. Of all communions on earth to-day they have lived longest without being tied to any secular power and without ever having sacrificed their apparently unneeded independence. It is difficult to correctly estimate the extent and quality of their influence. It was exerted in various ways, some of which we can trace, but it is probable that it is the most important that we cannot trace. Through Nicholas of Basle, Waldensian thought powerfully influenced the mystic Tauler and through

his writings not only quickened the hearts of many of the noblest Catholics but reached and moulded Luther himself. How far it was responsible for the great Protestant Free-Church movement, to which we are to turn in a moment, is more doubtful, but so similar were the two movements in their beliefs that these words of David of Augsburg concerning the Waldensians, written only about fifty years after Waldo's death in 1218, seem as if they must have been written to describe the Anabaptists three hundred years later. "Having been cast out from the Catholic Church they affirm that they alone are the Church of Christ and disciples of Christ. They say that they are the successors of the apostles and have apostolic authority and the keys of binding and loosing. They say that the Romish Church is the Babylonish harlot and that all who obey her are damned. They say that for the first time is a man truly baptized who is inducted into their heresy. But some say that baptism does not avail for little children, because they cannot yet actually believe. They repudiate all clerical orders, saying they would be rather a curse than a sacrament. Every oath is unlawful. They say it is not lawful to put malefactors to death through secular judgment."[3] The primacy of the Waldensians among free churches caused many later similar movements to be called by their name or at least to be

[3] *See Newman: History of Anti-Pedobaptism, p. 46.*

regarded as their spiritual children. So it was with the Bohemian brethren, for example, according to the testimony of Prof. Newman. I have unfortunately been unable to get at the original authorities of this important movement. Its originator, the saintly Peter Chelcicky, declares that the apostasy of the Church began when the relation of Church and State changed. He affirms that an insoluble contradiction is involved in the expression, "the Christian State," since to the essence of the state belongs compulsion, which is abhorrent to the true Christian.[4] Yet curiously enough, if Archivar Keller is correct, the Bohemian brethren never separated themselves from the state church.[5] We know however that Nicholas Storch, an important figure in the first stage of the Anabaptist movement which we are about to consider, was influenced by them both in thought and in church organization, and it seems not unlikely that he knew them as Waldensians.[6] It may therefore well be that the Waldensian movement was the channel through which the new life in Bohemia poured itself into the still newer life of Germany. And, once again, in that later offspring of the Anabaptist movement which we call the Mennonite connection, which flourished in those parts of the Netherlands in which considerable remnants of the Waldensians were settled, we find the Men-

[4] *Newman: History of Anti-Pedobaptism, pp. 450, 451.*
[5] *Keller: Die Wiedertäufer, p. 16.*
[6] *Newman, op. cit., p. 68.*

nonite leader, Cornelius van Huyzen, recognizing the Waldensians as the originators of their creed and worship. Indeed later we find some English sectaries asserting that through Mennonite and Waldensian they had maintained an unbroken succession from the apostles. But here again the Waldensian movement is only an adopted father of children of quite a different parentage. It is the sturdiest of a long succession of free-church movements before the Reformation, but no more than they, and far less than some of them, did it occupy the center of the religious drama of the times. It was only when Luther and Zwingli had made possible to men a free connection with God that the spiritual atmosphere was produced in which a free church movement could become a permanent and vital force in the world.

The great free church movement of Protestant, of essentially non-conforming, Christians was borne into the world by Anabaptists and made vital by Congregationalists—"for the base things of the world and the things that are despised did God choose, yea, and the things that are not to bring" not "to nought" in this case but to completion, "the things that are."

I wish that some great scholar might give his strength to the sympathetic examination and presentation of the Anabaptist storm of the early sixteenth century, or rather of that storm of which strict Anabaptism was the blackest cloud. It is impossible to describe it; it is al-

most impossible even to hold it together. Bullinger, its fairest contemporary chronicler, distinguishes twelve different "sects" among them, and there were doubtless more, though they were different from what he thought them. They differed from each other on a thousand minor points which the sympathetic Capito justly said "stand outside of any connection with the honor of God"[7] and they were ready to endure persecution and death for each difference. They differed from each other, also, on some most vital points,—on the authority of the Old Testament and even on that of the New, on the use and form of the sacraments and on the constitution of the church, on the existence of civil government, on the sufferance of oaths and private property, on the duration of the world, and on the use of force. Nearly all primitive Anabaptists disbelieved in physical resistance to evil; long before the Quakers were thought of hundreds of these convinced pacifists laid their lives down joyfully; yet the movement also included those who mistook Jan of Leyden for the Messiah and set up a polygamous kingdom of God at Münster which they defended with swords and strategy for well on toward two years against some of the best soldiery of the time. All kinds of people belonged to this wide-spread movement—the Zwickau-prophets who terrorized and sterilized Luther and the Huttites fleeing from well-ordered

[7] *Newman, op. cit., p. 245.*

homes because they would not allow their prince to strike a blow in their defense, Hans Denck and Schwengfeld, contemptuous of all outward rites and organization and those who insisted that only the immersed were open to salvation, the scholarly Grebel and Hubmaier and the Little Greek marched side by side with Blaurock the peasant and Andy of the Crutches—but upon this one point they all agreed, that *over the consciences to which God had spoken no man nor state nor church had any power.* The Spirit had come to them and they were not to be longer in subjection to the beggarly elements of this world. It was for freedom that Christ had set them free and they would far rather part from the body than from this free Spirit. They were often wild and they were usually unstable, but they were a noble army of martyrs. There is little exaggeration in this bitter description of them by Zwingli: "They judge the faults of others but see none of their own. To-day they wish this; to-morrow its opposite; to-day no government, a little later a government indeed, but one in which no governor shall be considered a Christian; to-day they demand a church of their own, afterwards they denounce the state for protecting the preaching of the gospel; at one time the priests should be slain, at another they should be allowed free rein; when children are baptized they bellow that there is no sin greater. They perform more such monkey-tricks every day than the African

wild-beasts. They greet no one of whom they disapprove. They quarrel at all corners of the city; if that is forbidden them, they go into their private quarrel-houses and sit in judgment on all men. When they have finished with that, they rinse each other out with such bitterness that there is enough gall left to bathe in. Such a poor, confused, bitter temper they call Spirit, whereas it is a most melancholy flesh." In other words they were free men of the spirit like their progenitors in Corinth, prophets who had not learned to control their prophetic spirits.[8] But they counted not their lives dear unto themselves and some of the most moving scenes in Christian history are their martydoms at the hands of their brethren in the state churches, for whom they prayed in all tenderness as the fire kindled about them. It is only recently that justice has been shown them at the hands of historians. Their name, Anabaptists, second Baptizers, has been not only scornful but misleading. For most of us to-day they are a rout of fanatical sacramentarians. It is true that they bitterly denounced infant baptism and that nearly all of them recognized the validity of the baptism of believers only, but the great movement had something far more fundamental at stake than the form of a Christian rite. Its deepest interest and its originating motive lay outside the sacramental realm. Egli, the great modern author-

[8] *1 Cor. 14 : 32.*

ity on the Swiss Reformation,[9] who was a careful investigator of Anabaptist origins, has brought enough original material to light to distinguish three distinct periods in their brief and startling history. The first, beginning in the summer of 1523, had to do with a separate church, the second, beginning in the summer of 1524, had to do with infant baptism, only the third, beginning in January of 1525, had to do with the public baptism of those who were compelled to disown the baptism administered to them in their infancy.[10] Separation from the state church was their primary object; questions regarding baptism were quite secondary to that. The witnesses against Felix Manz, who was drowned by order of the court, garbled a real truth when they affirmed that he told them that "there was more behind baptism than was yet declared" and "that baptism would at last overthrow the government."[11] Long ago Dorner correctly estimated the relative importance of these three leading convictions of theirs, when he wrote: "Zwingli saw that the setting aside of infant baptism was the same as setting aside the National Church, exchanging a hitherto national reformation of the church for one more or less Donatist. And if infant baptism were given up, there remained as the proper time for its administering only

[9] *The greatest work on this entire movement is his unfinished Geschichte der Schweizerischen Reformation.*
[10] *Egli, op. cit., p. 325.*
[11] *Burrage: Anabaptists in Switzerland, p. 102.*

the moment when living faith and regeneration were certain."[12] Sebastian Franck, a contemporary chronicler, saw into their hearts when he wrote of them: "Certain ones among them wish a Christian to be so holy, simple, innocent, dead to the world, so perfect, that he should never live after the flesh nor seek that which is upon the earth. Therefore a Christian does not desire to live in accordance with the world, nor to value anything worldly. Dying and living are the same to him; indeed this life has become a monotony."[13] And though Nippold goes too far when he says that the Anabaptists were the first to defend the separation of Church and State,[14] there can be no doubt that the erection of a spiritual church after the copy of the Apostolic church, freed from the strangling alliance with the State. was their initial as well as their highest hope. With a cause so essential to religion we can well understand why Zwingli declared the destruction of the Papal church to be "child's play" in comparison with the annihilation of these sectaries.[15]

In the joy of seeing one tyranny overthrown, these clear-thinking and high-spirited men were horrified to see another being set up. A Papal despotism was bad enough but it was at least

[12] *Geschichte der Protestantischen Theologie, pp. 293–294, quoted in Burrage, op. cit., p. 76.*
[13] *Keller: Wiedertäufer, p. 14.*
[14] *Berner Beiträge, quoted in Nitsche: Geschichte der Wiedertäufer in der Schweiz.*
[15] *Egli, op. cit., p. 332.*

a spiritual despotism, whereas the new régime in their city of Zürich was a secular one. The Spirit of Christ, Dweller within the individual soul, was being enthralled by the state. Men chosen for their business acumen and their military capacity were to become the authoritative judges of a divine force which brooked no judgment and to which most of them were strangers. They were much truer than Luther to those words of his: "From the beginning the worldly and the spiritual offices have been sundered by Christ. And experience shows but too clearly that there can be no peace where the city controls the preacher or where the preacher controls the city."[16] They feared that true religion would fare worse under merchants than under bishops. They could see but little gain in substituting Zürich for Rome. "These Baptists," said old Bullinger, "complain that the evangelical preachers use the government in matters of religion and that they declare not only that it may, but that it should, busy itself concerning matters of faith. But they (the Baptists) hold the precise opposite most stubbornly,—in which, indeed, they agree in part with the Papists who would shut out the Kaiser, the King, the Princes and all lords from the affairs of faith and church." Here the amazed Protestant historian reveals to us the spiritual brotherhood of Papists and Free Christians, standing shoulder to

[16] *Hast: Geschichte der Wiedertäufer, p. 147.*

shoulder for the independence of religion against the Protestant secularists. It is because of this horror at the secularization of religion that in the old Anabaptist record, we find these proud words: "Anno 1524 and 1525 is God's Word and the Gospel of Jesus Christ *come* into all Germany after the Peasants' War." We are fortunately in possession of some of the earliest conversations which heralded that coming. The three men who may be regarded as its discoverers are Stumpf, a preacher, Grebel, a young humanist, and Felix Manz, a citizen of learning and position. These three, Bullinger tells us, thought first to win Zwingli to their views.—"Over and over they visited him and Jud (his colleague) and reminded them that both of them should found a separate people and church, in which Christians should live guiltlessly according to the Gospel and should not be corrupted by interest or other usury. They should kill all the priests, Stumpf said; he had told his people that they should not pay interest nor tithes. Stumpf and Grebel insisted on having all things in common. When Manz said once that no one should be allowed in the new church that was not without sin, Zwingli asked if he would like to be one of them. At a meeting at Jud's house, the enthusiasts told Zwingli that he went too slow and was lukewarm in the concerns of the Church and God's Kingdom. The Spirit spurred to greater seriousness. . . . The apos-

tles in Jerusalem separated themselves from the wicked that they might establish a company of the faithful. So in Zürich it was necessary to separate from the crowd and to gather a pure church and a company of outspoken children of God, who have His spirit and are ruled thereby. Zwingli replied that the apostles had separated only from the enemies of the Gospel, not from those that were on the way to become its friends. "Dear brethren," he said, "don't think too much of yourselves. Be patient with the weak, sick flock that belong with you in Christ's fold, and separate rather from the works of darkness. You will not induce me to favor such a separation as you desire, for I cannot enter into it with God." [17] Shortly after these famous conversations, a great disputation was held in the city of Zürich regarding the mass and the destruction of images. When Grebel, at the close of its second day, proposed that the priests should be correctly instructed in regard to the mass, Zwingli replied that the members of the Council would decide that matter. At once Stumpf cried out: "You have no right to leave the decision with them. The decision is already given. The Spirit of God decides. Should the gentlemen of the Council give a decision contrary to the Word of God, then imploring Christ for His Spirit, I will teach and act against them." [18] All this time

[17] *Nitsche, op. cit., p. 9. Egli, op. cit., pp. 89–90.*
[18] *Burrage, Anabaptists in Switzerland, p. 69. Egli, op. cit., p. 106.*

nothing seems to have been said regarding the baptismal rite, because of which they have so unjustly been dubbed Anabaptists. And even after they had denounced Infant Baptism in a public disputation as a creation of the Pope and had begun to baptize their adherents, the Council of Zürich issued the following proclamation: "Moreover (in the same discussion) it clearly appeared that the authors of Anabaptism, by whom these gatherings and sects were first raised and for which they strive, were actuated in this affair by a bold and shameless mind and not by a good spirit, intending to gather around them a separate people and sect, contrary to God's commands, in contempt of the civil magistrate, to the planting of every kind of disobedience, and to the destruction of Christian love to neighbors. For they regard themselves as without sin and better than their fellow-Christians, as their words, actions, and life clearly testify."[19] The Council did not allow a dispute about baptism to cover up their initial—to them blasphemous—purpose of establishing a separated church. And two years later still (1527), understanding the root of all this turmoil and refusing to stress the baptismal controversies, the Council invited the other members of the Swiss Confederacy to take common measures against the Anabaptists who were aiming at the destruction "not only of the true right faith of Chris-

[19] *Burrage, op. cit., p. 146.*

tian hearts but also of outward and human ordinances and institutions of Christian and ordinary government, against brotherly love and good morals.'' [20] The leaders of the movement, then, regarded the State Church and incidentally the State itself, as then constituted, as their prime foe. This fact alone accounts for the fierceness and the persecution directed against these free-churchmen by Catholics and Evangelicals, by princes and Reichstag, by cities and magistrates. They had no conception of the rights that men claim when they believe themselves to be liberated from human tyrannies by the Spirit of God; it was simply their clear duty to put down the beginnings of anarchy. And though, after the movement spread from Zürich where it originated in its noblest form, it became largely a Baptist propaganda, we are reminded every once in a while of its deeper meaning by the statements of—or about—its individual converts. Thus Capito bears witness to Michael Sattler martyred at Rothenburg in 1527, saying that ''he showed great zeal for the honor of God and the Church of Christ, which he wished to have pure and irreproachable and free from offense to those without.'' [21] Even as late as 1551. Ghirlandi. an Italian priest, left the Roman Church and finally joined the Mennonite branch of this movement, because he ''sought a people who should be free from bondage of sin through

[20] *Newman, op. cit., p. 147.*
[21] *l.c., p. 244.*

the gospel of truth, and should walk in newness of life, a people that is God's holy, unspotted church, separate from sinners, without wrinkle and without blemish."[22] And Menno Simon, perhaps the noblest and most efficient of all the Anabaptists, converted to them in spite of the outrageous extravagances of Muenster, which he loathed, whose work influenced English and future American dissenters, and whose churches abide to this day, is proof that the movement even in its later stages was never without the high enthusiasm of its initial protest against bondage to the world. "We must be born from above," he says, "and transposed out of the evil nature of Adam into the good way of Christ from which a new life follows. The poor ignorant people are vainly consoled through external works and exercises. Let each one . . . no longer trust in the fact that he is a baptized Christian, nor upon long usage, nor upon papal decrees, nor upon imperial edicts nor upon the wit of the learned, nor upon human counsels and wisdom. No Scripture says that a carnally-minded man without new birth from God's Spirit has been saved nor can be, merely because he boasts his faith in Christ or hears mass or goes to Church or makes pilgrimages. For us a counsel has been made in heaven, to which alone we listen and which alone we must follow."[23]

[22] *Newman, p. 331.*
[23] *l.c., p. 300.*

Freedom has always been regarded as a dangerous word by those in authority; it is not therefore to be wondered at that these obscure men who contended so unequivocally for it as a right, and not merely as a convenience, at the gray dawn of the modern era, should have been persecuted by States and princes and should themselves have been bitter against the State. Sebastian Franck estimated that more than two thousand Anabaptists were executed in the five years between 1525 and 1530.[24] It is somewhat strange that in the face of these figures, the Christian world should throw its hands quite so high in air over the blasphemous Kingdom of God in Muenster. As a matter of fact it should rather seem strange that the main movement of the Anabaptists should have been so slightly influenced by the Peasants' War at its beginning and should have been blotted by only one Muenster at its height.

If our estimate of the dominant force behind this movement be in the direction of the truth, it is not strange that we should find so many extreme opinions with regard to government attributed to its leaders. As a matter of fact, they disagreed about its function and its rights. They may be said to be unanimous in their belief that, as Rothman put it in the earlier days of the development at Muenster, "In matters of faith the assembled church and not the magistracy has the authority."[25] The Mora-

[24] *Newman, p. 151.*
[25] *l.c., p. 281.*

vians admitted that God had given the princes authority over unbelievers.[26] Hubmaier insisted that the civil power has the right to execute evil doers but that God alone should punish the godless.[27] They would have all subscribed to the preface in which Castellio dedicated his Latin Bible to Edward VI: "The only enemies of our faith are vices and vices can be conquered only by virtues. The Christ, who said if they strike you on the one cheek, turn the other also, has called us to the spiritual task of instructing men in the truth, and that work can never be put into the hands of an executioner." [28]

There were some among them who went further than this. Manz, accused for having denounced magistracy, asserted that he held rather that no Christian might exercise it, though no one should punish with the sword.[29] Melanchthon names certain Anabaptists in Jena who held that no Christian could be a magistrate, because no Christian should punish with the sword.[30] This view was widely held, so widely that when Henry VIII, in far off England, proclaimed religious toleration in 1540, he expressly excepted those who held that it was unlawful for Christians to bear office.[31] There was a strong, though not quite unan-

[26] *Hast: Die Wiedertäufer, pp. 206–7.*
[27] *Newman, op. cit., p. 97.*
[28] *Jones: Spiritual Reformers in 16th and 17th centuries, p. 93.*
[29] *Cf. Burrage, op. cit., pp. 102, 106.*
[30] *See Hast, op. cit., p. 237.*
[31] *Newman, op. cit., p. 350.*

imous, feeling among the free-churchmen against warfare of any kind, some refusing to pay taxes for war, some refusing to engage in war, though not unwilling to supply soldiers with food (Jacob Gross of Strassburg), the great majority insisting upon unqualified non-resistance. Melchior Hoffman was indeed the first prominent free-churchman (for Muenzer was not a free-churchman) to abandon the idea.[32] The Moravians, like Muenzer, insisted on community of goods, which raised the wrath of the nobles, who had been already roundly denounced by such Anabaptist leaders as Grebel, Kantius and Roubli.[33] Very many, too, refused to take oaths. But biblical reasons were operative at many of these points as well as democratic ones. And it may well be doubted whether any other leaders than Hut and Tiziano opposed magistracy as an institution and wished to live without a State. John Bruppacher of Zumikon, though on the rack, declared that he had never heard that the Anabaptists teach that there should be no government or that they sought to overthrow it.[34] The Roman Catholic priest, Faber, claimed, it is true, in a little brochure published soon after the martyrdom of the scholarly Anabaptist, Hubmaier, that he had confessed to him that "their reason and object was to have no government but only from their own number to

[32] *Cf. Newman, op. cit., pp. 184, 185, 207, 235, 242, etc.*
[33] *l.c., p. 235.*
[34] *Burrage, op. cit., p. 211.*

draw out and elect one." [35] But in Hubmaier's treatise "On the Sword," we read rather "To punish the wicked is not to hate the enemy; the magistrate does not kill from wrath but according to the commandment of God." [36]

Curiously enough this fierce battle for religious freedom, the first costly skirmish for a free church in a free state which may be said to belong to the main campaign in which we are still engaged, was fought for an outpost apparently a good way from the base. For though it was the relation of Church and State that was at stake, the issue was joined concerning the sacrament of baptism. And yet any one who has transported himself sympathetically to the times of the Reformation has no difficulty in explaining that fact. The controversy concerning the Lord's Supper was really the battle-field over which was waged the battle between the Papists on the one hand and the Protestants on the other. Behind that conflict indeed was the far deeper one regarding the basis upon which sinful men might find acceptance with God, but the sacramental conception of the Roman Church was the visible token of its conquest over the hearts of the people. And history has shown that Zwingli and Calvin estimated its importance and its inevitable effects far more truly even than Luther. So the men who fought for religious freedom, who groaned

[35] *Vedder: Hubmaier, pp. 240–241.*
[36] *Printed in Vedder's Hubmaier. See particularly pp. 287, 296, 301.*

under the subjection of the church and the Christian to a company of aldermen, saw that it was again a sacrament that stood like adamant in their path. What the mass was to the reformers because of what it implied concerning the basis of justification, infant baptism was to the free-churchmen because of what it implied with regard to membership in the church. In those ritualistic times, what the eye saw carried greater weight than what the ear heard, and no matter what was decided about the efficacy of the mass and about the importance of personal faith, if every one was baptized in infancy and if every one who was so baptized was regarded as a member of the church, it was evidently hopeless to differentiate a Christian and a citizen. The weightier matters of religion would be buried under tithes and taxes, and the Church would become a branch of the police of the city councils. Therefore it was that in Zwingli's phrase, the people were "so hot about infant baptism,"[37] therefore that disputation after disputation was called to consider it in the various towns of Switzerland and South Germany and therefore that every town council agreed with the spirit of the proclamation of the council of Zurich: "All children must be baptized as soon as they are born and all parents ignoring this shall be imprisoned." The agitation about baptism of infants ended in transferring the rite from a

[37] *Cf. Nitsche: Geschichte der Wiederätufer, p. 28.*

law of the Church into a law of the State.[38] The State and Church became thereby indistinguishable.

But fortunately the bold champions of spiritual freedom took a further step, more daring, more radical than any they had been called to take hitherto. Surcharged with a consciousness of its high import, the old Anabaptist document, from which I have already quoted, thus recounts it: "The Reformers have smitten the vessel out of the hand of the Pope, but left the fragments therein; for a new birth of life hath one never seen with them. . . . To this wonderful work God hath called men in Switzerland; amongst them have been Balthazar Hubmeyer, Konrad Grebel, Felix Manz and Georg von Chur. These men had recognized that one must first learn the divine message, the love of an active faith, and only after having done so, should he receive Christian baptism. But since, at that time, there was no servant ordained to such work, Georg of the house of Jacob, called Blaurock, rose up and prayed Konrad Grebel in the name of God that he should baptize him. After that was done, the others there present did demand the same from Georg, and began to hold and to teach the faith. Therewith hath the separation from the world originated and hath grown up."

In this epoch-making transaction two things are to be noted. The first is that no words are

[38] *Burrage, op. cit., p. 99.*

wasted regarding the form of baptism. Some months after this, a man named Wolfgang Ulimann was immersed in the Rhine near Schaffhausen at his own request, but his example was only partially followed. It was not immersion, it was baptism, about which these high words were written. And the second thing to be noted is that baptism was regarded as initiation into the church. It was not an initiation into fellowship with God. As Hubmaier said at the beginning: "Where water-baptism according to the ordinance of Christ has not again been instituted, there one knows not who is brother and sister, there is no church, no fraternal discipline or correction, no exclusion, no supper." [39] Or as Konrad Grebel, the one who first dared to baptize a Christian upon whose brows magic holy water had been sprinkled in infancy, wrote to the worldly Muenzer, "From the Scriptures we learn that baptism signifies that by faith and the blood of Christ our sins have been washed away, that we have died to sin and walk in newness of life, and that assurance of salvation is through the *inner* baptism,—*faith,*—so that water does not confirm and increase the faith, as the Wittenberg theologians say, neither does it save." [40] Certainly this is a noble and a moderate statement to come from the man who through baptism with water instituted the new Church. And may I here in-

[39] *Newman, op. cit., p. 179.*
[40] *Burrage, op. cit., p. 87.*

sert one of the most satisfying statements I have ever found regarding the use of the sacraments, even though it be a digression? It is from Hubmaier and reads thus: "In baptism, one pledges himself to God and in the supper to his neighbor, to offer body and blood in his stead as did Christ for us."[41]

Now I do not affirm that the so-called Anabaptist movement had for its only impulse the freeing of the church from the trammels of the State. As with all men, the motives of the Anabaptist leaders were mixed. There was undoubtedly an element of Pharisaism in the movement, of jealousy of Zwingli and the preachers to the well-positioned, and a great pinch of impatience. Besides these inevitable dashes of evil, there was also a motive of great importance to which only passing reference has been made. It was a desire to reproduce the life and the customs of the early church and to follow literally the injunctions of Jesus and the New Testament. Harnack has said that there never has been a strong religious movement without dependence upon outward authority. That authority in the times of the Reformation was, of course, the Scripture. Nowhere was it in as high and undisputed favor as in Switzerland. After the Zwickauer prophets appeared, Luther in a letter to Melanchthon established a new canon: "*Quod non est contra Scripturam pro Scriptura est et*

[41] *Vedder: Hubmaier, p. 108.*

Scriptura pro eo.'' (That which is not opposed to Scripture is in favor of Scripture and Scripture is in favor of it.) But Zwingli adhered to Luther's earlier one: *''Eo ipso contra Deum quod sino verbo Dei.''* (That which has no support in God's word is thereby proven to be opposed to God.)[42] Hence the disputations on infant baptism were apparently determined by the appeal to Scripture alone. Zwingli's assertion that infant baptism was the divinely instituted substitute for circumcision and that circumcision was explicitly commanded in the Scripture, always carried the city councils,[43] who had other unexpressed reasons for their decision, but it did not convince the lay mind. Hence we find Sebastian Franck declaring that the Anabaptists built upon the letter of the Scripture, and it may well have been true that many of the humbler classes joined themselves to the sect not because of their desire for a free church but because of their desire for scriptural baptism. I think it it is clear that the rank and file grew insistent on adult baptism simply because it was in accord with the obvious meaning of Scripture. And yet there were always those among the Anabaptists who saw deeper. Georg Schoferl of Freistaedt, for example, asserted that ''Christ taught the common people the gospel by means of their own handicrafts, but for the

[42] *Newman, op. cit., pp. 66, 73. Egli: Geschichte der Schweizerischen. Reformation, p. 57.*
[43] *Cf. Jackson's Zwingli. Chapter XII.*

sake of the stiff-necked scribes he used Scripture, for which purpose also it must still be used and not for the sake of the common man, for he can be more successfully instructed by means of the creatures."[44] Hans Denck, having outgrown his Anabaptist faith, but one of the most prominent men in the whole spiritual movement, wrote in his dying statement: "I value the holy Scripture above all human treasures, but not so high as the Word of God, which is living, powerful and eternal, for it is God Himself, Spirit and no letter."[45] And so while Franck upbraided the Anabaptists for their literalism, Melanchthon reported scornfully that the Anabaptists in Jena claimed that the Bible must be taken spiritually.[46] At Muenster, before the extravagances had broken out, and the Lutherans and the Anabaptists sought for popular distinguishing watchwords, the shibboleth of the orthodox evangelicals was "Christ" while the significant shibboleth of the Anabaptist sectaries was "Father."[47] With all their loyalty to the New Testament there was a spiritual freedom and ecstasy about them that did not allow exclusive emphasis upon the historical and objective and that reproduced the characteristics of the primitive Christians. More than they, however, they emphasized the importance and rigor of Church Discipline, and when a con-

[44] *Newman, op. cit., p. 220.*
[45] *Jones: Spiritual Reformers, p. 28. Hast: Wiedertäufer, p. 225.*
[46] *Cf. Hast: Wiedertäufer, p. 237.*
[47] *E. S. Bax: Rise and Fall of the Anabaptists, p. 150.*

siderable minority appeared in any local church it was a sure signal for secession. They were not strictly congregational in their organization; their leaders took the place and the authority of the apostles. But their authority was not sufficient to be widely recognized, so that in constant bickerings and divisions they dissipated their spiritual strength.[48] Under the stress of persecution without and bigotry within and under the black stain of the "Messianic reign" at Muenster, the name Anabaptist became a byword and a hissing. But what they did was not done in a corner. The idea of a free-church became familiar to Europe and was transplanted to the saner and yet stolider race of the English. For underneath all jealousies and deeper than spiritual pride, the instinctive conviction that freedom is a necessary condition of religion created a type of spiritual life which could not die out of Protestantism.

[48] *Cf. for example the ancient book of Ubbo Philipps.*

LECTURE V

CONTRIBUTION OF CONGREGATIONALISM TO CHURCH POLITY

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The first Protestant protagonists of freedom, the Swiss and German Anabaptists, failed. Many reasons contributed to that failure. First of all, they were pioneers, and pioneers usually succeed by failing; that is their lot; they lay down their lives for their cause. The continent of Europe was prepared for a revolt against a religious tyranny with secular ambitions; it was not prepared for a weakening of centralized government; freedom and anarchy it could not differentiate. The apostles of freedom expected to be hounded and they were not disappointed.

But they contributed quite unnecessarily to the realization of their expectation. Their leaders were extremists and guilty of many excesses. The orgy of Muenster was in itself sufficient to unite the higher forces of civilization against the movement out of which it issued. If polygamy and the mistaking of a cobbler for Elijah were the fruits of religious freedom, then freedom was only another name for insanity.

Moreover, these apostles of freedom, like

most of those who range themselves under its banner, were not altogether free. They were bound to reproduce the forms as well as the spirit of the Apostolic Age, as that age was revealed in the Scriptures. Unlike the Congregationalists and Presbyterians of a later decade, they did not overlook the apostles; they went so far as to consider them the leading figures in the apostolic age. Unable to regard them as extraordinary and as unrepeatable as the miracles, they allowed freedom and authority to their own apostles. They thus blocked their path to democracy, but they were kept nearer to the temper and the forms of the New Testament. But this imitative polity gave to ill-balanced and unbalanced leaders opportunities for carnage which their fanaticism used only too well. Splits and counter-splits at the dictates of leaders reduced the ship of freedom to splinters; it foundered on mines which its own crew had sown.

Then, too, the word "Anabaptist" was not a mere nickname. The cause of freedom never gets clear of entangling alliances, nor did it in this case. It was obscured by a debate about a sacrament. It is true that to the Anabaptists the rite was only a sign of an inner reality, but the world was slow to believe that men would lay down their lives for anything which they did not deem of ultimate importance. It could not understand—even in those days—how a rite in itself unessential could become essential by

being commanded in the Bible. The issue seemed to many who thought more than they spoke a question of baptism rather than of freedom of faith.

And not only that, but the word "Ana" in this compound nickname Anabaptist was not altogether out of place. Here again, the noble men who were thus dubbed protested earnestly. They did not believe in being baptized over again; they had never been baptized. But there could be no question that they renounced communion with the great body of Christian people. If they did so because of an unessential rite, then they were fanatics beyond the sacred pale of common sense; if they did so because they did not believe in the Christianity of Christendom, then they were Pharisees, Donatists, Novatians, Perfectionists, judgers of their brethren, bigots. When Roger Williams later accused King Charles of blasphemy for calling Europe Christendom,[1] he spoke the truth, as to-day we know only too well, but he became unendurable even to the Pilgrim Fathers. If Separatists cannot convert the world to their view, so that they are Separatists no more, they are bound to go under. Non-Conformists who are too weak to be more than that are bound to be regarded as moral prigs, bound to be an eddy in the great stream of social and political life.

And so, for these reasons among others, the

[1] *Winthrop: History of New England (Savage's edition), Vol. II, p. 145.*

noble movement for real freedom in religion on the continent of Europe failed. It was overborne by its revolutionary significance, by the fanaticism of its leaders, by the inadequacy of its chosen sign, by the uncertainty of its polity and the elusiveness of its authority, and by its unescapable tendency to Pharisaic exclusiveness. It failed. And from its failure Europe has never recovered. The present war may be more wrapped up with that failure than any of us are aware. Religion has been cramped into national moulds; it has served and idealized and emphasized the State, its benefactor and subsidizer. It has strengthened rather than weakened the prejudices of race. It has followed common sense, and common sense, always intent on immediate good and unconcerned with wider issues, quite untransformed by the universal impulses of real religion, has produced a catastrophe in comparison with which Muenster may again be mistaken for the New Jerusalem.

It is the glory of Congregationalism to have taken up the struggle for religious freedom and to have succeeded where Anabaptism failed. To it does not belong the glory of conceiving a free church, untrammeled by all connection with the State. To that great idea the Baptists have the prior claim and to it they have shown the more abiding loyalty. But I do not think it is too much to say that what Anabaptists failed to do in Europe, Congregationalists ac-

complished in America. They were the chief influence in bringing about a civilization which is chiselled on the lines of freedom and in which religion has, as nowhere else, its proper and efficient place.

And this great service to religion and mankind, Congregationalists performed in their own despite. There was that in their principles and in their natures which forced them to a free church in which at the outset they did not believe. The idea of a church utterly disassociated from the state was known in England through the uproar occasioned by the proceedings and the persecutions of the Anabaptists. And it was well-nigh universally reprobated. The Congregationalists held in England the position on the extreme left which the Anabaptists held in Europe. They were equally despised and three of their prominent leaders were executed as enemies to the realm. But the Congregationalists were at one with their countrymen in upholding the idea of a state church; they only insisted that the state authorities execute the mandates of the Scriptures on church polity. Of the first ridiculed and persecuted leaders, there is only one who seems to call for a free church,—and he not quite. He was the theorist among them, a man of considerable more brain than character, who had the advantage over his brethren of not being compelled by his conscience to persist in his own theories, if they didn't work at the first

trial. His name was Robert Browne. He is called the Father of Congregationalism, not because he was the leader of the first autonomous church—Fitz was that [2]—or because out of his church grew the first enduring Congregational society, for it died, but because not being bothered by experience, he drew up a program and a constitution in which he set forth the abiding characteristics of our polity. Concerning the relation of church and state, Browne writes thus: "Yet may they (the magistrates) doo nothing concerning the Church, but onelie ciuile, and as civile Magistrates they have not that authoritie ouer the Church, as to be Prophetes or Priestes or spiritual Kings, as they are Magistrates ouer the same: but onelie to rule the common wealth in all outwarde Iustice, to maintain the right welfare and honor thereof, with outward power, bodily punishment, and ciuil forcing of men. And therfore also because the church is in a common wealth, it is of their charge: that is concerning the outward prouision and outward iustice, they are to look to it, but to compel religion, to plant churches by power, and to force a submission by lawes and penalties belongeth not to them, . . . neither yet to the church. Let vs not therfore tarie for the Magistrates. . . . If they be not christians should the welfare of the church or the saluation of men hang on their courtesie?" [3]

[2] *Cf. Champlain Burrage: Early English Dissenters, Vol. I, 93.*
[3] *l.c., Vol. I, p. 105.*

Even Browne assigns to the State the outward provision of the Church, but because of his general drift toward Anabaptist freedom from secular control, his name was distasteful even to his Congregational successors. Penry, for example, himself a martyr, declares that "he hates all schism, Donatist, Anabaptist or Brownist."[4] Jacob, the founder of the first explicitly Congregational church in England that did not go into exile, does not hesitate to say that "we and all true visible churches ought to be kept in order by the stretching out of the magistrate's arm."[5] Bradshaw in 1605 proclaims that the Civil magistrate "is the only one on earth that has power to punish a whole church or congregation."[6] The independent petition to the Rump Parliament in 1650 desires compulsory worship, a parliamentary commission to regulate ministers and the construing of open speaking against the fundamentals of Christianity as an offense against the State.[7] Cromwell established a church—the broadest and most Congregational ever conceived—but he established it. And when we come to our own American forebears, we find them assuming the same position. Of all Puritan emigrants to America, the Pilgrim Fathers were the most liberal and sensible, but even they had no clearly held notion of separation between

[4] *Cf. Champlain Burrage: Early English Dissenters, Vol. I, p. 150, note 2.*
[5] *Cf. l.c., Vol. I, pp. 3, 10. H. W. Clark: History of English Non-Conformity, p. 200.*
[6] *Burrage, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 288.*
[7] *Clark, op. cit., p. 356.*

Church and State. Robinson and Brewster over their own signatures agreed to take the oath of supremacy, if thereby they could have their form of polity written into their charter from the King.[8] They even went to such lengths of concession as to recognize the right of his Majesty to appoint bishops "to oversee the churches and governe them civilly unto whom they are in all things to give an account and by them to be ordered according to godliness."[9] They did not regard Church and State as two independent powers before they set sail for America. Nor did they later. From Salem, Gov. Endicott sent back two worthy men to England because they insisted on worshipping according to the rites of the English church.[10] The Colonies of New Haven and Massachusetts Bay limited both the office holders and voters to members in Congregational churches, no other church being allowed.[11] Massachusetts Bay, the strongest of all these colonies, under the masterful influence of Winthrop, spent no inconsiderable part of its legislative activity in ecclesiastical matters. Its first piece of legislation was a mandate that "houses should be erected for the ministers with convenient speed at the public charge."[12] One man was whipped and banished for writing letters to England slander-

[8] *Bradford's History of Plimouth Plantation, p. 44.*
[9] *Cf. Williston Walker: History of Congregationalism, p. 61; Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism, pp. 89–90.*
[10] *Walker: History of Congregationalism, p. 107.*
[11] *l.c., pp. 114, 120, 122, 123.*
[12] *Winthrop, op. cit., Vol. I., p. 36, note.*

ing the government and the orders of the churches;[13] another was banished for affirming in a petition that the Court had condemned the truth of Christ;[14] another was banished for claiming that he had not sinned for six months and that he was free from original sin;[15] another was fined for writing a book against taxation for the support of the ministers.[16] In 1638 a law was passed, which however was repealed in the next year, giving the Court power to fine, imprison or banish any one who had remained in a State of Excommunication from the church for six months. Further, "the denial of the books of the old and new testament—which were all enumerated—to be the written and infallible Word of God was punishable either by banishment or death for the second offence at the discretion of the Court, and an inhabitant who was guilty of this offence upon the high seas was made liable to the penalty."[17] Anabaptists were banished, a woman hung for witchcraft and four Quakers executed—all in the very harbor of Boston.[18] Roger Williams and Mrs. Hutchinson, enthusiasts and virtual perfectionists, were banished, though they were

[13] *Cf. Winthrop, Vol. I, pp. 68, 73.*
[14] *l.c., Vol. I, p. 29.*
[15] *l.c., Vol. II, p. 22.*
[16] *Cf. l.c., Vol. II, p. 112.*
[17] *Hutchinson: History of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay, Vol. I, pp. 423, 443.*
[18] *Cf. Walker: History of Congregationalism, pp. 128, 147–148, 197. Winthrop, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 149, 212, 307, 308, 332, 397. Bradford, op. cit., p. 461. John Stetson Beary: History of Massachusetts. First Period, pp. 363–372. Hutchinson, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 320–321.*

pious, clever and Congregational.[19] A minister was prohibited by the Court from preaching at a wedding;[20] a minister was summoned for daring to organize a second church in Saugus without a council;[21] the church was first advised and later commanded to undertake a mission to the Indians.[22] The Court in 1646 distinctly stated that the magistrates were bound to maintain the churches in purity and truth and hence could summon them to councils they deemed necessary.[23] And in 1648 the Cambridge Synod thus summoned and attended by all the New England Colonies, decreed that the power of the Magistrate should be exercised about such outward acts "as are commanded or forbidden in the Word." "Heresy, venting corrupt and pernicious opinions, . . . are to be restrained and punished by civil authority."[24] At one point, it is true, our fathers were wise; though the state could interfere with the church, the church could not interfere with the state.[25] Even at Plymouth the Governor walked before the minister, though for purposes of safety he walked behind Captain Standish.[26] A church member could not be called to account for his acts as magistrate nor

[19] *Winthrop, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 188, 194, 195, 198, 199, 204, 209–210, 293. Walker: History of Congregationalism, p. 135.*
[20] *Winthrop, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 382.*
[21] *l.c., Vol. I, pp. 187, 210, 220. Vol. II, p. 194. Walker: History, p. 137.*
[22] *Walker: History, p. 165.*
[23] *Winthrop, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 323.*
[24] *Walker: Creeds and Platforms, pp. 236–237.*
[25] *Winthrop, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 300.*
[26] *I regret not to be able at present to refer to the original authority for this statement.*

could a minister be also a magistrate.[27] On important points of public as well as ecclesiastical policy the ministers were summoned by the court to give advice, but only advice.[28] Not until 1684 was the franchise extended in Massachusetts to those who were not members of churches. It was only in 1729 that Baptists and Quakers were excused from taxation for the support of Congregational clergy, and the Episcopalians had to wait six years longer.[29] Taxation for church purposes was discontinued only in 1818 in Connecticut and in 1834 in Massachusetts. There can be no pretense that these Congregational champions of freedom grasped the great principle of freedom from the state. And bitterly did they pay for their error. It was through the act of the Connecticut legislature that the Saybrook Synod was called together to standardize church practises in the colony. That Synod virtually renounced the liberty for which their fathers braved so many perils. It tied up the churches to what the Hartford North Association ninety years later proudly called "not congregationalism but essentially Presbyterian."[30] This standardization, this tendency to conformity and consolidation, which legislatures

[27] *Winthrop, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 299–301.*

[28] *Cf. Winthrop, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 117, 133, 183. Hutchinson, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 424.*

[29] *Acts and Resolves of the Province of Massachusetts Bay, Vol. II, pp. 494–496, 714–715, 782–783. At first the support of the clergy seems to have been voluntary, but in 1654, as the country towns grew lax, a law providing for ministerial support was passed. Hutchinson, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 427.*

[30] *Cf. Walker: History of Congregationalism, p. 207, for a milder judgment of the Saybrook Synod.*

so like and which this Connecticut legislature caused, operated to create friendlier feelings toward the Presbyterians of the Middle States than to the Simon pure Congregationalism of Massachusetts, and had not a little to do with the "Plan of Union," so fatal to the growth of the independent churches. A still graver loss may be directly traced to this interference of the state in matters of church practise and support. The Unitarian schism would have been much less widespread and much less damaging in material ways if members of the parishes—as distinct from members of the churches—had not felt a right to have a voice in the calling of the pastor for whom they were taxed. This feeling became aggressive and the famous Dedham decision followed, disallowing the right of any church to exist apart from its parish. In many churches that became known as Unitarian, the votes of the Parish determined the matter. They welcomed Unitarianism because it seemed to them less insistent on the deeper experience of religion. It was more humane and therefore more to their liking. And so the world, tied up to the church, wrecked it when the chance came its way. For Unitarianism, the representative of liberal-minded religion, was swamped by the dominance of the unreligious, and the wing that was more conservative and more religious—though perhaps more mistaken doctrinally—lost much of its footing in the community which it had founded.

Yet notwithstanding this colossal mistake of tying Church and State together, Congregationalism succeeded eventually in establishing a free church in America, which is more influential and more thoroughgoing in its freedom than any other of the free churches of the world. And it did more than that. For not only are Church and State separated in America as in no other Christian nation) save perhaps most recently in France), but no matter how strict the connectionalism of some of the denominations may be, the individual church is regarded throughout the country as the real seat of power. The courts of New York State have recently ruled that a Presbytery, while possessing the right to dissolve a Presbyterian church without its consent, cannot thereby procure the right to its building, inherent in the Board of its Trustees as a civil corporation. This heavy straw shows the direction of the wind here in America. We are widely congregationally organized—the Baptists, Disciples, Congregationalists and smaller bodies make up a very large per cent. of American Christianity —but we are almost altogether congregationally spirited.

That Congregationalism has had so large a part in so vast a spiritual achievement is due I think primarily to four factors, two of which were formal and two of which were personal and providential. Though there are many fas-

cinating by-ways into which I should like to enter, we must confine our attention to these.

The first of these factors is, of course, the fundamental Congregational conviction concerning the nature of the church. There is little difference here among the various notable Congregational pronouncements. In 1606, for example, the church at Amsterdam, antedating the famous Pilgrim Church at Leyden, declared itself as follows in the petition it presented at the accession of King James: "Every true visible Church is a company of people called and separated from the world by the word of God and joyned together by voluntarie profession of the faith of Christ in the fellowship of the Gospell. Being thus joyned, every Church hath power in Christ to take unto themselves meet and sufficient persons into the Offices and functions of Pastors, Teachers, Elders, Deacons and Helpers, as those which Christ hath appointed in his Testament."[31] With this concurs the declaration of the famous Cambridge Synod of 1648, called by the Massachusetts Court: "A Congregational-church, is by the institution of Christ a part of the Militant-visible-church, consisting of a company of Saints by calling, united into one body, by a holy covenant, for the publick worship of God, and the mutuall edification one of another, in the Fellowship of the Lord Jesus. . . . There may be the essence and being of a church with-

[31] *Williston Walker: Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism, pp. 78–79.*

out any officers. Nevertheless, though officers be not absolutely necessary to the simple being of churches . . . yet ordinarily they are to their well-being."[32] This insistence not only upon the independence but complete autonomy of the particular church was regarded by the fathers as of the very essence of Congregationalism. No ordaining councils, with ministers of neighboring churches placing their hands upon the head of the elected pastor, obscured the self-completeness of the churches. In Browne's primitive church in Middleburg, we find his more substantial colleague Harrison writing in 1583: "Whereas they tie the Ordination of euerie Minister, as it were, vnto the girdle of other Ministers—that is to laie a greater bondage vpon ye churches than they are able to bear. For admitt there be onelie one church in a nation, and they want a pastour: must they seeke ouer Sea and lande, to gett a minister ordained by other ministers?—And is it not a dishonour to Christ Jesus, the head of euery congregation, which is his bodie: to say that his body together with the heade, is not able to be sustained and preserued in it selfe?"[33]

The first ordination and election of a minister upon American soil at the church of Salem, "which was ye 2. church erected in these parts," conformed strictly to this conception. One of the participants in that transaction on

[32] *Williston Walker: Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism, pp. 205, 210.*
[33] *Burrage: Early English Dissenters, Vol. I, p. 107.*

the 20th of July, 1629, writes thus only ten days later: "So Mr. Skelton was chosen pastor, and Mr. Higginson to be teacher; and they accepting the choyce, Mr. Higginson, with 3. or 4. of the gravest members of ye church, laid their hands on Mr. Skelton, using prayer therewith. This being done, ther was imposission of hands on Mr. Higginson also. And now, good Sir (the letter was written to Governor Bradford at Plymouth) I hope that you and ye rest of God's people with you will say that hear was a right foundation layed, and that these 2. blessed servants of ye Lord came in at ye dore, and not at ye window." [34] And Winthrop, notwithstanding his aristocratic leanings, is compelled to make the following entry in his fascinating journal under the date of Sept. 22, 1642: "The village at the end of Charlestown bounds was called Woburn, where they had gathered a church, and this day Mr. Carter was ordained their pastor, with the assistance of the elders of other churches. Some difference there was about his ordination; some advised (I suspect Winthrop himself of being the spokesman of these some) in regard they had no elder of their own, nor any members very fit to solemnize such an ordinance, they would desire some of the elders of the other churches to have performed it; but others supposing it might be an occasion of introducing a dependency of churches, etc., and so a presbytery, would not allow it. So it

[34] *Bradford: History of Plimouth Plantation, p. 317.*

was performed by one of their own members, but not so well and orderly as it ought." [35] With such a godly fear prevailing among the settlers of the Bay, we can understand why it was that sturdy objection was raised to fortnightly ministers' meetings, but Winthrop writes that "this fear was without cause; for they were all clear in that point, that no church or person can have power over another church." [36] Were it well if that godly fear could again be stirred into life to-day?

Historians have often wondered why the New England churches were all gathered in the Congregational way, when the Pilgrim Fathers were the only outspoken Congregationalists among the emigrants. But it would seem to me that the Puritans of the Church of England, who dominated the flourishing colony of Massachusetts Bay, were better acquainted with Congregationalism than with Presbyterianism. Take away the bishops from the Church of England, and you have left parish churches, one of which, at least, in the 17th century had secured the right of electing its own clergymen.[37] In 1605, we find a non-separatist affirming: "A true Visible or Ministeriall Church of Christ is a particular Congregation being a spirituall perfect Corporation of Believers, and having power in its selfe immediately from Christ to administer all Religious meanes of faith to the

[35] *Winthrop, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 109, 110.*
[36] *l.c., Vol. I, p. 139.*
[37] *Cf. Burrage: New Facts Concerning John Robinson, p. 21.*

members thereof."[38] And John Endecott of Salem assures Gov. Bradford that the Plymouth form of God's worship is "the same which I have professed and maintained, ever since the Lord in mercie revealed himselfe unto me; being farr from the commone reporte that hath been spread of you touching that perticuler."[39] The astute John Robinson was right in assuring the daring adventurers of the deep "that many of those who both wrate and preached against them, if they were in a place wher they might have libertie and live comfortably, they would then practise as they did."[40] At any rate we have Bradford's word for it "that there was no agreement by any solemn or common consultation, but that it is true they did, as if they had agreed, by the same spirit of truth and unity, set up, by the help of Christ, the same model of churches, one like to another; and if they of Plimouth have helped any of the first comers in their theory by hearing and discerning their practises, therein the Scripture is fulfilled that the Kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven which a woman took and hid in a measure of meal until the whole was leavened."[41]

But fundamentally our forefathers were Congregationalists not because of the habits of the past, nor certainly because they believed our

[38] *Early English Dissenters, Vol. I, pp. 286.*
[39] *Bradford, op. cit., p. 316.*
[40] *Hutchinson: History of Massachusetts Bay, Vol. I, p. 418 (quoted from Bradford).*
[41] *Burrage, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 362.*

polity conducive to religious growth and expressive of individual liberty, but because they discovered it in the New Testament. Unlike the more logical Anabaptists, they simply struck out from the church organization all apostles, prophets and evangelists as extraordinary and proceeded to organize on ordinary ground. This saving bit of arbitrary exegesis saved them from that completely imitative polity of the founders of the continental free churches, and gave us Congregationalism. It was however a long time after it had been practised that any other reason was assigned for its erection than that it was so ordained in the Word of God. Only under the sting of the Saybrook platform and its treason to fundamental principles of church independency, did John Wise, "Pastor to a Church in Ipswich," dare to put Congregationalism on an independent basis. After of course affirming unquestionable Biblical authority for it, he proceeds as he says to "open a new realm of thought" by writing: "When the aforesaid government or power, settled in all, when they have Elected certain capable Persons to Minister in their affairs, and the said Ministers remain accountable to the Assembly . . . they will be more apt and inclined to steer Right for the main Point, viz., The peculiar good, and benefit of the whole, and every particular member fairly and sincerely. And why may not these stand for very Rational Pleas in Church Order? For certainly if Christ has set-

tled any form of Power in his Church, he has done it for his Churches safety, and for the Benefit of every Member: Then he must needs have been presumed to have made choice of that Government as should least Expose his People to Hazard, either from the fraud, or Arbitrary measures of particular Men. And it is plain as day light, there is no Species of Government like a Democracy to attain this End." [42] Here, indeed, as far as was then possible, is Congregationalism made to stand upon its own feet. It is the true Christian polity, not merely because it is undoubtedly biblical but because it is just as undoubtedly conducive to the spiritual welfare of men. Yea, Wise goes a step further forward when he proclaims Congregationalism to be alone in harmony with essential manhood. "He (God) sets the Will to turn about itself without forcing it, that so man's Religion may be the free and candid Emanations of his Noble and Exalted Nature. But when God has thus gained Man; may we rationally imagine that in erecting his Trophies he will assign and make him over to some Petty and Arbitrary Potentates in matters of Religion? or settle him under a Despotick Government as though he was the spoils of a spiteful War? No certainly, but Man must now be considered as some high Allie invested with more Power than ever." [43] Thus deeply and

[42] *Wise: A Vindication of the Government of New England Churches, p. 62.*
[43] *l.c., pp. 72–73.*

strongly does Wise found Congregationalism on that reverence for man which is of the essence of Christianity, with which it comports and which it does so much to emphasize.

The other formal factor which I would emphasize is not fellowship, though it is very abiding and important. But fellowship was nothing novel; men had been fellowshipped to death; it was the freedom of fellowship which made it beneficial. I choose for brief remark rather the definite bond of union which in Congregational eyes, from the very beginning, makes a group of men into a church, viz., the Covenant.[44] The exiles in Frankfurt in Queen Mary's time made use of such an instrument,[45] and Burrage tells us that some of the Continental Anabaptists did likewise,[46] but in the former case the covenant was an afterthought introduced as the basis of discipline and in the latter it was not the constituting element. But from the very first, beginning with Robert Browne and possibly even with Fitz, a Congregational church was created by the covenant. The precise importance of the covenant is nowhere better set forth than in a letter of a Vicar of Cranford in 1640: "The Brownists stick not only at our Bishops, seruice and Ceremonies but at our Church. They would haue euery particular congregation to be independent.

[44] *Cf. Hutchinson: History of Massachusetts Bay, Vol. I, p. 420. Here the covenant and not fellowship is mentioned as one of the fundamental Congregational principles.*
[45] *Burrage, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 74.*
[46] *l.c., Vol. I, p. 98.*

They would haue none enter Communion but by solmne Couenant. Not that made in Baptisme, or renewed in the Supper of the Lord, but another for reformation after theire owne way:'' [47] The Covenant was precisely what the scandalized Vicar thought and almost said. It was in reality a third sacrament, far more important than the minimized baptism, administered in infancy, and a prerequisite for the enjoyment of the Supper. It is somewhat difficult to see how they discovered this significance of the Covenant in the Scripture; it looks almost as if they installed the Covenant in this all-important place by the compulsion of their moral instincts. At any rate they thereby made good a serious defect of the Anabaptists. They put an act of the will, compelled by the Holy Spirit, at the foundation of the Church and thus completely broke with sacramentalism. The Baptists, as we have seen, did not ascribe salvation to baptism, but their insistence upon it as the bond of church fellowship has confused their own life and misrepresented them before the world. From the beginning, the Congregationalist has emphasized moral values in religious experience. The autonomy of the church and the entrance into its holy activities and privileges through a personal commitment of the life to its Creator has made it an undeviating and effective witness to the supreme worth of the individual will. It

[47] *Burrage, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 311.*

has presented Christianity to men at its simplest and most characteristic point, unmixed by magic or pomp. It is a singularly pure exemplar of the voluntary principle in religion.

From the beginning Congregational covenants have been of the simplest sort. Some good Providence guided the instinct of our fathers into ways that led to liberty. John Robinson, the pastor of the Pilgrim Fathers, declared: "Euery true Church of God is ioyned with him in holye covenant by voluntarye profession to haue him the God therof and to be his people."[48] In 1616 Henry Jacob "founded" a Congregational church in London. We read: "They joyned both hands each with other Brother and stood in a Ringwise: their intent being declared, H. Jacob and each of the Rest made some confession or Profession of their Faith and Repentance, some were longer, some were briefer, Then they covenanted together to walk in all Gods Ways as he revealed or should make known to them."[49] And to go ten years further back to the sacred soil of Norwich, where the Church arose which went in part by way of alien Leyden to America, Bradford makes this affecting note in his rather matter-of-fact journal: "So many therfore of these proffessors as saw the evil of these things, in thes parts, and whose hearts ye Lord had touched with heavenly zeale for his trueth, they

[48] *Burrage: New Facts Concerning John Robinson, p. 17.*
[49] *Burrage: Early English Dissenters, Vol. II, p. 294.*

shooke of this yoake of antichristian bondage, and as ye Lord's free people, joyned themselves (by a covenant of the Lord) into a Church estate, in ye fellowship of ye gospell, to walke in all his wayes, made known, or to be made known unto them, according to their best endeavours, whatsoever it should cost them, the Lord assisting them. And that it cost them something this ensewing historie will declare."[50] And this simplicity of the Covenant declaration was preserved in the new country, the noble confession of the first gathered church, the church in Salem, leading the way. The confession is still in use and reads as follows: "We covenant with the Lord and one with an other; and doe bynd ourselves in the presence of God, to walke together in all his waies, according as he is pleased to reveale himself unto us in his Blessed word of truth." In the Providence of God, the confessions of faith usually adopted by the individual churches have fallen away and the Covenant as the sole basis of church membership and Christian belief for both ministers and laymen is becoming more and more the rule in our churches. Is it any wonder that the differentiating mark of Congregationalism is neither conservatism nor liberalism but true Catholicity of temper? For the ancient declaration of Bradshaw in 1605 still stands: "They hould that Christ Jesus hath not subiected any

[50] *Bradford: History of Plimouth Plantation, p. 13.*

Church or Congregation of his, to any other superior Ecclesiasticall Iurisdiction, then vnto that which is within itself. So that yf a wholl Churche or Congregation shall erre, in any matters of faith or religion, noe other Churches or Spirituall Church officers haue (by any warrant from the word of God) power to censure, punish, or controule the same: but are onely to counsell and aduise the same, and so leaue their Soules to the immediate Iudgment of Christ." [51] Having thus won the proud distinction of providing the church of Christ with the only possible basis of Catholicity, the vast responsibility is upon us of demonstrating that Catholicity and Holiness are not mutually exclusive terms. We have rewritten the word Catholic before the word Church; would that with as good conscience we might point to our groups of Christian disciples and feel, if we did not say, "Here are holy catholic churches."

There is time for only the briefest reference to the two non-ecclesiastical factors in the lasting triumph of our polity. The first of these is the personal character of the Pilgrim and Puritan Fathers; the second, a new country in which to work our polity out. Without them our principles would not be written so large in religious history, yet for them our principles were not responsible. As in every other crisis of church polity we have discovered that the condition of the world at large

[51] *Burrage, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 288.*

was partly responsible for the course and the outcome of the development of Christian organization, so it is here. A thoroughgoing study of Church Polity would be fascinating in the extreme, because it would be an investigation of those currents of human thought and emotion sufficiently widespread and dominant to express themselves in the activities of one of the two abiding institutions of human society. No Church polity was made from inner impulses alone and each advance step has depended upon a Providential interaction of internal and external forces. In observing the mighty achievement of our ecclesiastical ideals, we have to record our gratitude that it was attained largely by the personal character of their representatives and the unparalleled opportunity of an unoccupied land which their daring and their patience utilized.

I am not so sure that Bacon was wrong when he declared in 1592 that the Brownists in England were "a very small number of very base and silly people," for at that time all who were at all conspicuous were forced to flee to wide-hearted Holland. And of the exiles, there were not a few of a sort to justify Archbishop Bancroft's remark in 1593: "I know the nature of schismatickes to bee of such giddinesse as that no one thinge will content them longe."[52] The "ancient church" in Amsterdam was speedily rent by dissensions that remind one of Ubbo

[52] *Burrage, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 139.*

Philipps' account of the Anabaptists and that caused an onlooker to say of them: "There are none willing to bee feete or any other inferior members, they would all bee heads." But the Pilgrim Fathers were of a different stripe. When forced to leave Scrooby, they landed at Amsterdam, but they purposely went further on to Leyden with the express desire to avoid mingling with the squabbles of their co-religionists who had preceded them thither. Both they and the Puritans who followed them to America left the Church of England with extreme reluctance and only so far and for so long as their consciences impelled them. They never berated those who persecuted them and I have no doubt that John Robinson, at least, prayed for them. William Brewster and William Bradford were men of gentle though unwavering character, of measureless patience and of sacrificing spirit. Of John Endecott we do not get a clear picture, but John Winthrop was kept both by his property and family interests from reviling order, from despising tolerance and from glorying in isolation. Roger Williams was not well treated by these men; it may be that he was too idealistic for them, it is certain that he was too self-righteous. When a man carries his separatism so far that he refuses to commune with his own wife, there is something wrong with him. Williams became for a short while an Anabaptist, and with good reason, for that noble high-minded man is a splen-

did embodiment of the deep insight mixed with stubborn intolerance and ill-poised judgment that characterized that movement. Our progenitors succeeded just because they disliked their separatism and sought to make it as slight as might be. I do not know of any more sane and moving writings in the world than the respective journals of Bradford and Winthrop, which, with very necessary excisions, should be read by every lover of his country and his church. Were there time to quote the affecting but matter-of-fact eulogies which Bradford writes of Robinson and Brewster, their worth and success would be clearer to you. The leaders were all men of experience with the world and the ministers were, many of them, among the most gifted graduates of Cambridge University. The Anabaptists left the State churches of the Continent with the three glad leaps which Christian took when he saw his burden drop into the sepulchre; the Congregationalists, on the other hand, made the change with much the same spirit with which the earliest Christians were forced out of the synagogues. In religion it is only inevitable changes that are permanent changes; intolerant revolutions are short-lived.

But it was the new country which reinforced the character of the Congregational separatists and robbed their separatism of the inevitable tinge of Pharisaism which must to the public

mind always inhere in a separatist fellowship which exists side by side with an established church. But with an ocean between you and your established church, the tinge of self-righteousness disappears. Indeed, as we have seen, the separatists became in a sense the establishment; only the freedom of their essential principle saved them from a shipwreck on the Scylla of governmental exclusiveness after having escaped by a wide margin the danger of the Charybdis of voluntary Pharisaism. It was the ocean and the Indians and the hard work of conquering a new continent for the ways of civilization that kept the Pilgrims from the disaster that befell the Congregationalists of Middleburg and Amsterdam and from the mediocre success of English Independency. Governor Bradford's journal has more to say about the state of the beaver-trade than of the church. God kept the spirit of the fathers pure and strong by enforcing upon them, and finally by establishing upon them, the work of their hands. The ocean is not only our best defence against the barbarous jealousies and armies of Europe; it was the instrument of God for ridding a necessary religious revolution from bitterness and for fixing its attention upon its faith rather than upon its protest. For to that "deep, unplumbed, estranging sea" we owe not a little of that great process by which Protestantism has become transformed into spiritual Catholicism.